

JUDAISM

JUL 19 1983

AMBASSADOR
COLLEGE LIBRARY

BEING A JEW AND AN AMERICAN —

DO THEY MESH?

Edward Alexander • Jerold S. Auerbach • Ira Eisenstein
Arnold M. Goodman • Robert Gordis • Philip M. Klutznick
Milton R. Konvitz • Anne Lapidus Lerner • Leo Pfeffer
Emanuel Rackman • Anne Roiphe • Herman E. Schaalman
Harold M. Schulweis • Daniel Jeremy Silver
Walter S. Wurzbarger

TORAH AND THE MEGABOMBS

Joseph Polak

THE SCARRED COUNTENANCE OF GOD

Karl A. Plank

SIBLING RIVALRY IN GENESIS

Norman J. Cohen

E No. 127 / VOLUME 32 / NUMBER 3 / \$3.50 **SUMMER 1983**

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

STATEMENT OF SPONSORSHIP

The American Jewish Congress is sponsoring the publication of JUDAISM: A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF JEWISH LIFE AND THOUGHT as part of its basic policy to stimulate an informed awareness of Jewish affairs, encourage Jewish scholarship and adequate opportunities for Jewish education, and generally foster the affirmation of Jewish religious, cultural, and historic identity.

JUDAISM, conceived as a free and non-partisan organ, is dedicated to the creative discussion and exposition of the religious, moral and philosophical concepts of Judaism and their relevance to the problems of modern society. Through an exploration of the meaning and needs of the Jewish experience, it hopes to widen the channels of communication among Jews and to affirm Jewish verity and vitality to the world at large.

Views and opinions expressed in the articles and reviews are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Editors or the American Jewish Congress.

NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS

Because of the very high cost involved in copies of the journal being sent to wrong addresses, our subscribers are urgently requested to notify our office in writing six weeks before a change of address takes place.

In the absence of such notification, all copies returned to us by the post office will be remailed only upon the payment of an itemized bill for the additional postage.

All copies that are not returned to us by the post office will be replaced only upon the payment of an itemized bill for the additional copy, as well as for the additional postage.

BACK COPIES

We are frequently asked for reprints of individual articles. While we cannot accede to such requests, many back issues are available for \$3.00 each. Orders must be accompanied with payment.

NOTICE TO AUTHORS

It is suggested that authors keep a copy of the manuscript sent to our office. Unsolicited material will be returned only if accompanied by postage.

Articles appearing in this journal are abstracted and indexed in *Religious and Theological Abstracts*.

JUDAISM: A QUARTERLY JOURNAL is published by the American Jewish Congress. It appears in January, April, July and October. Office of Publication: 15 East 84th Street, New York, N.Y. 10028. Re-entered as second-class matter at Post Office, New York City, N.Y. Subscription in the United States and Canada, \$12.00 for one year, \$20.00 for two years, \$28.00 for three years; foreign subscription, \$13.00 for one year, \$22.00 for two years, \$31.00 for three years. Special rate for bulk (10 or more) and student subscriptions, \$8.00. Single issue, \$3.50; single issue abroad, \$4.00. Make checks payable to the order of JUDAISM, and send to 15 East 84th Street, New York, N.Y. 10028. Allow six weeks for notice of change of address.

US ISSN 0022-5762

The Board of Editors invites articles, communications, comments and discussion for publication. Address: Editors, JUDAISM, 15 East 84th Street, New York, N.Y. 10028. Copyright © 1983 by the American Jewish Congress.

JUDAISM

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL

Issue No. 127 / Volume 32 / Number 3 / Summer 1983

The First Reader R.G. 259

BEING A JEW AND AN AMERICAN: CONGRUENCE OR CONFLICT?
The Nature of the Problem ROBERT GORDIS 262

Approaches To The Problem

<i>American Jew</i>	JEROLD S. AUERBACH	263
<i>Seeking Ease in Exile</i>	EDWARD ALEXANDER	267
<i>Jewish Civilization is Ancillary</i>	IRA EISENSTEIN	271
<i>American Jewry — Competing Loyalties</i>	ARNOLD M. GOODMAN	273
<i>Multiple Loyalties Do Not Mean Disloyalty</i>	PHILIP M. KLUTZNICK	276
<i>No Escape From Hyphenation</i>	MILTON R. KONVITZ	278
<i>Parallel Centers for Jewish Creativity</i>	ANNE LAPIDUS LERNER	280
<i>Anti-Semitism — No Cause for Alarm</i>	LEO PFEFFER	283
<i>"Dual Loyalty" is Oversimplification</i>	EMANUEL RACKMAN	286
<i>Loyalty</i>	ANNE ROIPHE	289
<i>The Key is the Covenant</i>	HERMAN E. SCHAALMAN	292
<i>Loyalties Are Always Complex</i>	HAROLD M. SCHULWEIS	294
<i>We Can Live With Ambiguity</i>	DANIEL JEREMY SILVER	296
<i>There Need Be No Conflict</i>	WALTER S. WURZBURGER	299
<i>Torah and the Megabombs</i>	JOSEPH POLAK	302
<i>God After the Holocaust: An Attempted Reconciliation</i>	JOHN FISCHER	309
<i>Maimonides and our Love for God</i>	SHUBERT SPERO	321
<i>Qumran — The Essenes (poem)</i>	DONIA CLENMAN	330
<i>Two That Are One — Sibling Rivalry in Genesis</i>	NORMAN J. COHEN	331
<i>The Scarred Countenance: Inconstancy in the Book of Hosea</i>	KARL A. PLANK	343
<i>Where is Jewish Culture to be Found?</i>	TRUDE WEISS-ROSMARIN	355
<i>Possible Deus Homo?</i>	DAVID S. SHAPIRO	358
<i>A Lost Heritage (poem)</i>	DOREEN POLIANICH	365

REVIEWS

<i>Monotheism</i>		
by Lenn Evan Goodman	JACOB B. AGUS	367
<i>Anti-Semitism in British Society, 1876-1939</i>		
by Colin Holmes		
<i>Political Anti-Semitism in England, 1918-1939</i>		
by Gisela Lebzelter	WILLIAM FRANKEL	368
<i>Back to Basics</i>		
by Burton Pines	MARSHALL J. BREGER	370
<i>The Arab-Israeli Wars</i>		
by Chaim Herzog	HOWARD M. SACHAR	372

COMMUNICATIONS

<i>from Eliyahu Safran, Solomon B. Freehof,</i>		
<i>Ronald Gruen and Leonard B. Gewirtz</i>		375

BOOKS RECEIVED		380
----------------	--	-----

Editor
ROBERT GORDIS

Managing Editor
RUTH B. WAXMAN

Contributing Editors

JACOB B. AGUS, Baltimore, Md. • SELIG ADLER, Buffalo, N.Y. • ALEXANDER ALTMAN, Waltham, Mass. • SALO W. BARON, Canaan, Conn. • MEIR BEN-HORIN, Beachwood, Ohio. • BEN ZION BOKSER, New York, N.Y. • EUGENE B. BOROWITZ, New York, N.Y. • WILLIAM G. BRAUDE, Providence, R.I. • ARTHUR A. COHEN, New York, N.Y. • GERSON D. COHEN, New York, N.Y. • EMIL L. FACKENHEIM, Toronto, Canada • DAVID FLUSSER, Jerusalem, Israel • MARVIN FOX, Waltham, Mass. • SOLOMON B. FREEHOF, Pittsburgh, Pa. • MAURICE FRIEDMAN, San Diego, Cal. • THEODORE FRIEDMAN, Jerusalem, Israel • NAHUM N. GLATZER, Waltham, Mass. • JUDAH GOLDIN, Philadelphia, Pa. • ISRAEL GOLDSTEIN, Jerusalem, Israel • MAX GRUENWALD, Millburn, N.J. • MENAHEM HARAN, Jerusalem, Israel • ARTHUR HYMAN, New York, N.Y. • ERICH ISAAC, Irvington, N.Y. • MORDECAI M. KAPLAN, Jerusalem, Israel • MILTON R. KONVITZ, Ithaca, N.Y. • ARTHUR J. LELYVELD, Cleveland, Ohio • SOL LIPTZIN, Jerusalem, Israel • LEVI A. OLAN, Dallas, Texas • HARRY M. ORLINSKY, New York, N.Y. • JAKOB PETUCHOWSKI, Cincinnati, O. • LEO PFEFFER, New York, N.Y. • JOACHIM PRINZ, Newark, N.J. • EMANUEL RACKMAN, New York, N.Y. • NATHAN ROTENSTREICH, Jerusalem, Israel • ZALMAN M. SCHACHTER, Philadelphia, Pa. • DAVID S. SHAPIRO, Milwaukee, Wis. • DAVID WOLF SILVERMAN, Chicago, Ill. • ERNST SIMON, Jerusalem, Israel • SHEMARYAHU TALMON, Jerusalem, Israel • DAVID WEISS, New York, N.Y. • PAUL WEISS, Washington, D.C. • TRUDE WEISS-ROSMARIN, Santa Monica, Cal. • MICHAEL WYSCHOGROD, New York, N.Y.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

In increasing measure, modern men are turning again to the quest for a worldview on the issues that are timeless—the meaning of life, the challenge of death, the purpose of suffering, the significance of the individual, his relation to society, and the goal of history. In order to advance this enterprise of spiritual discovery of our time this Journal has been projected. It will be primarily concerned with the philosophy, ethics, and religion of Judaism as a factor in the contemporary world . . .

We are committed to the proposition that Judaism has positive value today for Jews and for the world . . . At the same time, we disassociate ourselves from the dangerous tendency toward the hardening of party lines on the contemporary Jewish scene . . . The members of the Board of Editors belong to every school of Jewish life or to none. The trends popularly referred to as Orthodox, Conservatism, Reform, Reconstructionism, as well as others that as yet have no specific names, have their advocates among us, though no institution or movement is officially represented . . . Undoubtedly, our differences will find expression in these pages, but we shall be at one in opposing the dogmatism which takes for granted that one's own particular standpoint has a monopoly on truth and the authoritarianism which would suppress any contrary point of view.

Judaism will be dedicated to the quest for truth in the spirit of freedom. Our columns will be open to anyone who has something significant to say and the ability to say it well. New and unconventional interpretations, whatever their standpoint, will be welcomed from every source, for we share the conviction of the Talmud that "Both these and the others are the words of the living God." *From the introductory article by Robert Gordis, "Toward a Renaissance of Judaism" in Vol. I, No. 1.*

The First Reader

Single Loyalty or Multiple Loyalties?

The deepening crises in all areas of national life and international society have heightened actions and exacerbated emotional tensions on issues which, not so long ago, would have been discussed in calm and rational terms. One such issue, which has not yet emerged fully into the consciousness of American Jews, is their relationship to the two poles of their being, the American nation and the Jewish people.

The problem is not new. The Hellenistic Jewish philosopher, Philo, in the first century, expressed his sense of rootedness in two soils by declaring, "Alexandria is our fatherland and the holy city of Jerusalem our motherland." Since his day, countless efforts to deal with the problem have been proposed. They run the gamut from the first advocates of Jewish political and civic emancipation in Western Europe and the Maskilim in the Czarist Empire, like Moses Leib Lilienblum and Yehuda Leib Gordon, to the statement by Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis, cited by several contributors to our current symposium, "Being a Jew and an American — Congruence or Conflict?"

The distinguished participants in the discussion represent a cross-section of Jewish attitudes and emotions. At many points, the reader will sense a *cri du coeur*, a "cry of the heart" rather than a reasoned exposition. Other essays represent a meticulous effort to analyze issues, sorting out the irrelevant and concentrating on the essentials.

Stop, Now!

The manifold concerns of human beings today, great and small, including the issues with which JUDAISM is concerned, are in grave danger of disappearing, together with the human race, if the leaders of the megapowers are allowed to have their way as they step up their armament race.

Needless to add, no prophet or sage of the past ever contemplated the horror of nuclear annihilation. Nonetheless, the Jewish tradition does contain implications which bear upon this ultimate catastrophe.

In his paper, "Torah and the Megabombs," *Joseph Polak* explores these sources in Jewish tradition and makes a moving plea for all human beings, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, to halt the headlong descent of mankind into nuclear hell.

The Problem Remains

The literature on the Holocaust in all categories — history and biography, philosophy, theology and sociology, prose and poetry — continues to grow apace, but the basic agonizing questions remain.

John Fischer, in his paper, “God After The Holocaust: An Attempted Reconciliation,” presents a clear and succinct survey of the major approaches to the problem of God and the Holocaust, as treated by contemporary thinkers. In addition, he proposes some basic guidelines for responding to the abiding mystery of our century.

Love and Logic Are Compatible

The most distinguished exemplar of rationalism in Jewish thought is the philosopher Maimonides, whose awesome intellect approached Judaism with the canons of rigorous logic. On the other hand, the highest religious experience in Judaism is encompassed by the term *ahavat ha-Shem*, “the love for God.”

In his paper, “Maimonides and our Love for God,” *Schubert Spero* argues that there is no dichotomy between the two. He suggests that for Maimonides — and, indeed, for the tradition as a whole — love for God, properly understood, means a sense of gratitude to Him for creating a world impregnated with ethical and esthetic values, a gratitude which is expressed in obedience to His will.

Siblings Will Quarrel

A deeply ingrained characteristic of the Jewish spirit is the Midrashic faculty. This is the capacity to look at a text, particularly a sacred one, very closely and read in it — or into it — deeper levels of meaning that reveal religious or ethical insights not previously recognized. The result is a rich and extensive body of writing which includes dozens of works of varying character produced during the past twenty five hundred years. Indeed, as I have demonstrated elsewhere, the prophet Hosea, in the eighth century B.C.E., offers us a Midrash on the life of the patriarch Jacob.

That this capacity is still alive and well is demonstrated by *Norman J. Cohen* in his paper, “Two That are One — Sibling Rivalry in Genesis.”

Israel and God

We are constantly reminded of the limitless power of the Bible to stimulate thought and to generate new insight into the human condition. A case in point is afforded by *Karl A. Plank*, in his paper, “The Scarred Countenance: Inconstancy in the Book of Hosea.”

He finds in the tragic marital experience of the prophet Hosea signif-

icant new light on the basic weakness of human nature, which is not so much a dedication to innate evil as inconstancy in maintaining the good.

Jewish Culture Can Be Found Here

The thirtieth anniversary of JUDAISM was marked by a Conference on Jewish Culture and Religion in America, held in November 1981. The proceedings of the Conference, which were published in the Summer 1982 issue of this journal, evoked considerable interest.

In a brief essay entitled "Where is Jewish Culture to be Found?" *Trude Weiss-Rosmarin* takes exception to the concept of Jewish culture expounded by Harold Bloom, of Yale, on the one hand, and Robert Alter, of the University of California, on the other. She maintains that both views, divergent though they be, fail to do justice to the breadth and depth of authentic Jewish culture, whether in America or elsewhere.

More on the Incarnation

The Summer 1982 issue of JUDAISM contained a review-essay by Michael Wyschogrod entitled, "A New Stage in Jewish-Christian Dialogue." In it he contended that the idea of the incarnation, which is central to traditional Christian theology, is not as repugnant to Jewish religious thought as has been generally assumed. In the First Reader in that same issue, the Editor expressed his disagreement with Wyschogrod's position and invited discussion of the subject.

In "*Possible Deus Homo?*" *David S. Shapiro* presents an analysis and a rebuttal of Wyschogrod's contention, demonstrating that the idea of an incarnation is totally unacceptable to Judaism in all its periods — biblical, talmudic and medieval.

I should like to add several additional considerations. That God had to become man in order to "show his love for his children," as the doctrine of the incarnation avers, means a drastic limitation from the Divine attributes of infinite love and wisdom. A finite human being may not be able to penetrate to the condition of another person without entering physically into his position. As the Ethics of the Fathers puts it, "Do not judge your friend until you reach his place." God needs no such transformation to understand His creatures. Anthropomorphism, like any kind of representation of God, means a limitation upon His nature. The prohibition of images, including images of God, in the Decalogue, as well as throughout the Bible, is, and remains, normative for Judaism and, indeed, for all high religion.

R.G.

BEING A JEW AND AN AMERICAN: CONGRUENCE OR CONFLICT?

The Nature of the Problem

ROBERT GORDIS

THE GROWING TENSION BETWEEN THE AMERICAN government and the State of Israel on a large number of issues and the rising tide of anti-Jewish sentiment and activity in the United States have led some American Jews to confront the problem of the relationship between their American loyalty and their Jewish commitment. The issue is addressed with warmth and frankness by Jerold S. Auerbach, Dean of History at Wellesley College in his paper, "American Jew."

Because of the obvious importance of the subject, the paper was circulated among a representative group of Jewish thinkers and leaders who were invited to participate in a symposium on the subject, "Being a Jew and an American — Congruence or Conflict?"

It was suggested to all of the contributors that they might refer directly to the Auerbach paper or address any, or all, of the following questions:

1. Does "living in two civilizations" constitute a viable option for an American Jew when there are no major confrontations between the State of Israel and the United States?
2. When a divergence of interests or attitudes does develop between Israel and the United States, what are the criteria that should guide an American Jew in taking a stance on the issues involved?
3. Is an accommodation between Jewishness and American loyalty possible on terms other than the familiar Emancipation formula, enunciated in nineteenth century Germany, of "*deutsche Staatsbuerger Juedischen Glaubens*"?
4. What is the relative strength of emotional elements as against rational factors in establishing the attitude of American Jews to their Jewish and American commitment?
5. What role does the threat of anti-Semitism play in molding the attitude of American Jews toward these two poles of their being, and in the public expression of their positions?
6. Is it possible, or desirable, for American Jews to consign Judaism to the religious sphere and all other concerns to American society and culture?

It is a pleasure to present the fruits of the thought of a distinguished group of American Jews on these questions which give every promise of becoming more important day by day.

APPROACHES TO THE PROBLEM

American Jew

JEROLD S. AUERBACH

I AM AN AMERICAN JEW. THAT HAS RECENTLY become a more problematic identity. Buffeted by conflict between my country and my people, the American and Jewish sides of my self are less compatible than ever. Simultaneously, the hostility that Israel has elicited from disaffected American Jews is profoundly disturbing. If a house divided cannot stand, the plight of a house divided and besieged is even more ominous. That leaves me in a quandary: must diaspora Jews wander endlessly, uprooted not only from their country but from their own people?

Unlike most Jews I know, I cannot reflexively or unconditionally assert that my only loyalty is to the United States. Nor, in the effete way that German Jews once resolved the issue by evading it (claiming that they were Germans of the Mosaic persuasion), can I rest comfortably with the assertion that I am an American whose religion is Judaism. It is not merely a matter of national affiliation and religious identity, as reassuring as that distinction might be to most Jews, and as quickly as that claim might silence most critics. It is more complex than that.

I am an American Jew, not a Jewish American. That is, I am a citizen of the United States but I belong to the Jewish people. It is, bluntly, a matter of competing — if not yet actively conflicting — loyalties. Usually they are compatible. Under stress, however, the link between them is fragile. It may be ready to snap.

Anatomically, the distinction is easy to describe: my body is in the United States; my heart and soul are in Jerusalem. It is a paradoxical contortion, for whenever I am in Israel I am identified as an American (if not as an Anglo-Saxon). Israelis tend to be impatient with the diaspora dialectics of Jews who profess their Zionist commitments from privileged American sanctuaries. But American Jews, by definition, are not Israelis; there are secular and religious dimensions of life in Israel that can easily

JEROLD S. AUERBACH is chairman of the department of history at Wellesley College.

instil discomfort among Jews of varying diaspora persuasions. A certain kind of Jewish state, after all, may contradict a Jewish state of mind that has been refined by a century in the American promised land.

In Israel I must always deal with the flip side of American suspicion about my ultimate loyalty: Israeli perplexity. If I am a Jew, I have often been asked, why do I not make Israel my home? Even after a year in Jerusalem (which feels more like home than any place I have ever lived in), and many visits to Israel (the only place that inverts my normal anxiety about leaving "home" and my eagerness to return), I still have not formulated a satisfactory response. Because, I answer without conviction, I live in the United States.

Life in the United States is not difficult for Jews. For some it is still the golden land; for most it is, unquestionably, home. It is not that easy for me. Must I, therefore, in the memorable warning of the Sixties, love it or leave it? Suppose I cannot love it; and suppose, for a variety of reasons, I do not (at least, not yet) choose to leave it. Can I possibly be an American Jew on terms that will satisfy the Christian majority, persistently demanding affirmations of loyalty, the Jewish minority, usually all too eager to provide those affirmations, and me?

The dilemma is sharp. To affirm my undivided loyalty as an American I must occasionally suppress my competing allegiance as a Jew, attached by the deepest bonds of historical identity to my people. During my lifetime, Germans, Poles, Rumanians, Hungarians, Czechs, and so many others, to say nothing of Israelis, have had to die as Jews. Why, then, should I not choose to live like one? In the diaspora I must comply, if only tacitly, with someone else's calendar, cultural norms, definitions of civility and propriety, enticements to my children, and benign (or maligned) insensitivities to Jewish concerns. When I affirm my deepest loyalty to the Jewish people, I subject myself to accusations of dual loyalty that invariably have served as the pretext for virulent anti-Semitism. There are those who would be delighted to discover that their suspicions of divided loyalty are confirmed. Most Jews would be appalled to have them acknowledged by another Jew. So be it.

If that were the only problem, *dayenu*. It is not only the latent conflict between my country and my people that leaves me uneasy, but the blatant bitterness among Jews. The flight of fellow Jews from Israel, at least in the mandarin academic circles that I inhabit, threatens to become a spiritual *yeridah* of considerable proportions. But the alleged need for moral redemption in Israel, a dubious proposition at best, is unlikely to be satisfied because American Jews denounce its government and impugn its moral credibility before a delighted Christian audience. Surely, as recent history amply demonstrates, there are more than enough people predisposed to condemn Israel without Jews clamoring to lead the chorus of public denunciation. The ferocious criticism that followed the Israeli invasion of Lebanon severely damaged some fundamental principles of

trust among Jews. We are conditioned to expect the worst from everyone else, so we seldom are surprised by outrageous double standards that convict Jews of crimes for which others are instantly exonerated. There is cause for concern, however, when Jews internalize the indictments of their most hostile critics and race to distance themselves from their own people.

It is still painful to recall last summer and fall when American Jews, unrestrained in their public denunciation of Israel, accused it of everything from moral suicide to brutal genocide. Whether they were only engaged in agonized soul-searching, as they claimed, or experiencing a massive failure of nerve as Jews under intense pressure, remains unclear. (But it is possible, as one Israeli observed, that "the only Jews in America frightened by Begin's policies are frightened American Jews.") Undeniably, the level of Jewish suffering was intense, and appropriately so. But to encounter so many self-appointed Jewish judges of Israeli morality, some of whom could not even make moral distinctions between the Israeli army and the PLO for their own children, is to contemplate a sorrowful chapter in modern Jewish history. Not one without precedent, however: in 70C.E., while the zealots in Jerusalem fought the Romans, Jews also fought each other until nothing was left, except Masada, to fight about.

An undercurrent of diaspora antagonism toward Israel has been gathering force since 1977, when Menachem Begin was elected Prime Minister. Begin's leadership terminated a long era of good feeling between the United States and Israel. American Jews felt comfortable with the Israel of Ben Gurion and Golda Meir; they especially appreciated the conciliatory posture of Labor leaders Rabin and Peres, who usually displayed a commendable willingness to submit to pressure from the American government. That made it easier for American Jews to be good Americans.

From the start, however, Begin made American Jews uneasy. He behaved like an irascible Old World relative from the *shtetl*, whose gestures, intonations, and priorities (a Prime Minister who went to synagogue?) made assimilated secular Jews uneasy lest their Christian neighbors think ill of them. Yet his strident commitment to Eretz Yisrael (a Jew who took God's covenant with the patriarchs seriously?) alarmed Jews who preferred to turn the other cheek to the enemies of Israel. Begin, whom some would claim as the first *Jewish* Prime Minister of Israel, threatened acculturated Jews with a wicked dilemma: would they respond to him (and to the Israel that he represents) as members of the Jewish family or as American outsiders? Would they stand with their people in troubled times, when their people stood alone? Long before last summer, American Jews, proclaiming their universalist priorities, had begun their retreat from an Israel that was too theocratic, or Levantine, or Spartan (in the militaristic sense) for their enlightened sensibilities.

If the Jewish people is not destroyed by internecine warfare (which, after all, it has survived throughout its history), there always remains the possibility that it will be destroyed by others. As the double standard of Western judgment (which always finds Israel morally culpable) sharpens, silent accommodation loses its appeal. It was easy for Americans, perched on nightly news broadcasts and editorial boards, to denounce Israel. It was not the American border, after all, that was located a few kilometers from a heavily armed enemy. But if my government should act in ways that harm my people, it harms me because I belong to them. So the Reagan plan, for example, a canny proposal to undercut the emerging perception (solidly grounded in history, geography, and demography) of Jordan as *the* Palestinian state, reads as though it had been drafted by King Hussein.

If American interests become incompatible with the interests of the Jewish people, as under the Reagan Plan they may, then I must choose. I understand that presidential definitions of national interest shape American policy in the Middle East, but it is unclear why American Jews should be committed to Hashemite priorities. I do not wish to feed anti-Semitism or heighten anxiety among those American Jews who instinctively flock to Uncle Sam for protection. But if I must choose, I will choose as a Jew. That choice will not erase the anomalies; it will merely shift their burden more comfortably. During two thousand years in exile, Jews recited "Next year in Jerusalem" with sorrow and yearning. In 1948, and more decisively in 1967, yearning merged with fulfillment. Now I can touch the Western Wall, this year in Jerusalem. When I do, I touch the entire history of my people: our dispersion and our return. Because I am an American citizen I can also choose to live here. I appreciate that choice, but I will not pretend that it precludes other commitments, other loyalties.

For the moment, it is my choice to identify with the historical experience of my segment of the Jewish people, dispersed in exile. I am not disloyal to my country. But I will remain loyal to my people, remembering "*Kol Yehudim mispakhah ahad*." I am no longer persuaded by the trade-off, now almost two hundred years old, that defines "enlightenment" and "emancipation": in return for promises of civil equality and individual rights, Jews were expected to relinquish their claims for political autonomy and to compress Judaism into a religion. But it may not suffice to be an individual with a Jewish (religious) identity: a Jew at home, perhaps, but surely an American on the street. The historical essence of the Jewish people has always been, and remains, a collective communal identity. So, if American push comes to shove against Israel, with American Jews shoving as hard as anyone, I must consider whether I will dissolve my dual loyalties. How could I not immerse myself, unequivocally, in the shared collective fate of my people?

Seeking Ease in Exile

EDWARD ALEXANDER

DURING THE LAST ROSH HASHANAH SERVICE in the *shul* that I attend, the president of the congregation offered a few observations on the Torah reading for the second day of the holiday, the 22nd chapter of Genesis, in which Abraham is instructed by God to "Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there in sacrifice . . ." He told his congregation of American Jews that the story of the binding of Isaac was a reminder that Jews are still called upon to make sacrifices, but that they ought to find consolation in the fact that whereas Israeli Jews are called upon to sacrifice their sons, we American Jews are asked only to sacrifice, to contribute, our dollars. Later in the service we participated in a memorial prayer for (among others) "our brothers and sisters who have fallen in the defense of our holy land."

During both the sermon and the memorial prayer I could not but think of a young man who had spent many years of his childhood in my city (Seattle) and who had lost his life fighting as a paratrooper in the battle for control of Beirut Airport in the second week of June. I returned from *shul* and looked through a set of old photographs in which this young man, then but a little boy, appears at a Chanukah party alongside other Jewish boys from Seattle, Jewish boys now blithely pursuing their respective academic, business, and legal careers while poor Ronen Eidelman lies dead in the military cemetery in Haifa. It struck me then that every discussion of the problematic relation between Jewishness and American loyalty, and between Israeli and Diaspora Jewry must begin with this terrifying, overwhelming question of life and death. Who, after all, decreed that these Jewish boys should have such contrasting destinies? Can a people which believes itself bound together, by covenant to the living God and by history to each other, assume that an accident of birth is sufficient justification for complacency in distinguishing between the sacrifices expected of the Abrahams called to Moriah and the Abrahams called by the United Jewish Appeal, which asks not for your life but only for your money?

But at least the president of my congregation interpreted this distinction with modesty and the recognition that American Jews, however they may insist on their "oneness" with Israel, are not, and have no right to be,

EDWARD ALEXANDER is professor of English at the University of Washington, Seattle.

equal partners in their relationship with the Jews of Israel. Professor Auerbach, in his fine essay, makes a similar acknowledgement when he says that "my body is in the United States; my heart and soul are in Jerusalem." Here he is in the tradition of Yehuda Halevi rather than in the newly-invented one of our American Jewish ethical idealists, the intrepid signers of anti-Israel letters to the *New York Times*, the rabbis, who, in the studios of the major television networks, struggle for Israel's moral purity, and the assorted sociologists and political scientists for whom Israel is a Jewish zoo that they visit from time to time in order to validate their credentials as experts on the *genus* Israeli. In their imagination, as Hillel Halkin has shrewdly remarked, the Jewish people is indeed one, but its body is in the east and its soul in the west.

To each according to his needs: while eighteen-year-olds here are defending their country's threatened borders . . . their Diaspora comrades can be picketing for Mexican farm workers or writing term papers on varieties of ethical theory. Truly a convenient division of labor!

Not long ago I heard a leading political reporter of *Ha'aretz* address a group of American professors and rabbis. He said that Israel lived with two threats to her existence: one came from the Arabs, the other from the Jews of America, who sat in the fleshpots dispensing dollars and advice to their poor, threatened cousins in Israel, who *were* poor and threatened precisely because there were only three million of them and not six million. At this point a rabbi-professor rose indignantly to tell the reporter that no Jew had the right to read any other Jew out of the people Israel, who are "one, united, equal." "We all," insisted the rabbi, "stood at Sinai together." "Did you stand there," responded the reporter, "in 1956 or 1973?"

The question of Jewish "dual loyalties" within American society does not seem to me a compelling one. Who, after all that has happened to world Jewry in the past forty years, has the right to ask it of us? Roman Catholics whose primary allegiance is to a Pole sitting in the Vatican? Protestants whose missionary interests once determined our China policy and whose National Council of Churches now funnels millions of dollars to anti-American terrorist groups all over the world? Besides, according to a poll of American Jews conducted in August 1982 by Steven M. Cohen of Queens College, 81% of the American Jews questioned flatly disagreed with the statement that "each American Jew should give serious thought to settling in Israel." Perhaps the people who should be asking us American Jews hard questions about our dual loyalties are not our fellow American citizens, but our fellow Jews in Israel. In the *Jerusalem Post International Edition* of Oct. 10-16 1982, two separate stories perfectly illustrated how incredible, impossible, and unthinkable to our "leaders" is the prospect of living in a free and independent Jewish state. Henry Siegman, executive director of the American Jewish Congress, after berating American Jews who, on principle, refrain from open criticism of Israel as "marranos" and

"*galut* Jews," told them that if they think *hasbarah* for the State of Israel must be their overriding consideration in life, then *aliyah* is indeed the only answer, and they should act on that inescapable conclusion." That, in Mr. Siegman's view, would serve them right! If they cannot be, like him, perfectly at ease in exile, let them go suffer in Zion. Elsewhere in the same paper, Leon Hadar quotes an unidentified American Jewish "activist" who wants so much to get rid of the Likud government that he in desperate moments *almost* thinks of "making *aliyah* together with other American Jews who could add the 10 Knesset seats Labour needs for victory." One wonders what it was that kept such rhapsodic celebrants of "the Israel it used to be" (thus Milton Viorst in the *Washington Post* and on National Public Radio) from making *aliyah* during the twenty-nine years when Israel could be certified as socialist and liberal and "democratic" (i.e., before Oriental Jews changed their voting habits).

It is ironical that American-Jewish liberals are troubled by a sense of conflicting or "dual" loyalties at precisely the time when the presidency of this country is occupied by a man whom they have long hated with a passion that they nowadays reserve for Menachem Begin. This irony might have revealed to them (but it has not) that their current discomfort as supporters of Israel is a function of the new potency of the worldwide campaign long waged against Israel by the Arabs and their greedy, pusillanimous supporters, and not of any particular government either in Israel or in the United States. What I have elsewhere called the journalists' war against Israel began after the 1967 war; the UN Zionism-Racism resolution came in 1975; and organized American-Jewish attacks on Israel came immediately afterwards. These same, suddenly very "American" Jews have also conveniently forgotten that anti-Semitic fulminations by racist agitators like Jesse Jackson preceded not only the arrival of a Likud government but even Mr. Jackson's discovery that there was such a place as the Middle East. The Jews who now blame the Lebanese War or Israel's famous "intransigence" for their own discomforts in American society are the spiritual successors of countless Jews in many generations who have blamed anti-Semitic outbreaks not on the anti-Semites but on their victims. Thus, the Joint Program Plan of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council of 1982-82 placed the blame for "anti-Semitism in the Black community" on "anti-black animus among Jews." Liberalism tends to assume that everybody is guilty of a crime except the person who happens to commit it; Jewish liberalism goes a step further to discover that it is precisely the victim who is guilty of (provoking) the anti-Semitic attack against him. American Jews who, in their panic (generally excessive) over instances of anti-Semitism, blame their difficulties on Menachem Begin, or on settlers in Judea, or on the Lebanese War, are very much like the emancipated German Jews mentioned in Dr. Gordis' third question, people who blamed the hostility aroused by their own

assimilation upon their unassimilated (and notoriously unkempt) brethren from the east who had moved into Germany.

We Jews who linger in the American Diaspora bear a burden of guilt because, despite our financial contributions and political support, we remain essentially spiritual parasites whose Jewish identity feeds upon the State of Israel. Those American Jews who compound their guilt with the rationalization that they remain physically outside of, and ethically superior to, Israel because of their devotion to world betterment and pure justice remind me of the young man who asked Thomas Carlyle how he could reform society and was told by the Scottish sage: "Make an honest man of yourself and there will be one less rascal in the world."

Jewish Civilization is Ancillary

IRA EISENSTEIN

I SHALL COMMENT BRIEFLY ON THE QUESTIONS set forth in Dr. Gordis' invitation.

1. "When there are no major confrontations between the State of Israel and the United States," the question of living in two civilizations is not a matter of loyalty to be divided between two sovereign nations, but one of finding enough time and energy to be able to take advantage of what each civilization offers. Living in the United States, a Jew (like other citizens) is surrounded by the sights and sounds of his environment. He speaks English, listens to American radio and watches American TV, discusses the political, economic and social scenes which directly affect his daily life.

Jewish civilization in the American environment is, at best, ancillary. It must seek out the interstices of the daily round to make room for itself. While there is always, in the Jew, a sense of belonging to another people besides the American, an emotional tie which binds him to the Jewish people, his consciousness of being Jewish remains passive, unless some overt anti-Jewish word or act occurs.

In a word, American civilization pervades his life, without his having to exert any effort. Experiencing Jewish civilization requires a conscious effort. (These observations are more or less valid, depending upon where one lives: parts of Brooklyn are different from Dubuque.)

2. In the event of conflict between what is perceived as the interests of the United States and those of Israel, the natural tendency for the American Jews is to take the part of Israel, giving it the benefit of the doubt. This is not so much the product of a greater "loyalty" as it is the tacit assumption that the United States is strong enough to withstand political or military setbacks, while Israel's life is precarious and, hence, Israel needs more support than strict objectivity would provide.

Functioning as well is the expressed or implicit notion that one is an American by accident of birth; that is, because one's parents happen to have been in America when one was born. Whereas being Jewish seems to be an ongoing fact — one's family was Jewish before coming to America, and would remain Jewish if, for any reason, it migrated from America. In this respect, the feeling of "belonging," of being a member of an extended family, applies more immediately and with greater force to the experience of being a Jew.

IRA EISENSTEIN is President Emeritus of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College.

Beyond that, however, an American Jew wishes to judge any situation on its merits. It is conceivable that a reasonable Jew would subordinate the interests of Israel in light of the circumstances, despite the risk that he might be hurting the very nation whose fate, he senses, is tied to his own. An American Jew can do no other, and be true to his obligations as a citizen. The only possible exception would be a situation in which the very *existence* of the state of Israel is clearly at stake; and that dilemma no one can contemplate with equanimity.

3. The compromise, or perhaps better, the capitulation, represented by "*deutsche Staatsbürger Jüdischen glaubens*" was a reflection of incipient German totalitarianism. As the price of citizenship, nineteenth century nationalism demanded the surrender of loyalty to sub-cultures and sub-groups. Only theological differences were tolerated — and even then, Jews were often compelled to transfer their religious convictions before being able to enjoy the full benefits of citizenship.

American nationalism — so long as it remains true to its best traditions — makes no such demands. One might say that we would cease being Americans in any meaningful sense of the term, if Jews (or members of any other group) were driven to make a choice between religion and/or ethnicity, and loyalty to America.

4. Emotional elements, referred to above, are not easy to quantify. On the whole they are very strong, sometimes irrationally so. A powerful factor would be one's sense of security as an American Jew. If one felt free to take a strong position for Israel, vs. America, it would be the result of possessing a sense of deep rootedness in this country, of being thoroughly at home here, having lost the last traces of "immigrant" status. One would have to feel secure in one's Jewishness, having discarded all sense of inferiority in the presence of an overwhelming Christian population. (A test: would you read a Hebrew-Yiddish newspaper on a plane flying to California?)

5. The threat of anti-Semitism may be assessed objectively or subjectively. *Actual* anti-Semitism, organized, tolerated by the government, encouraged by religious institutions, with a publicly declared program of anti-Jewish action, would, of course, have the expected effect of solidifying the Jewish community. (A few Jews would try, as usual, to escape, and get out from under. But this would not modify the total picture.) This is not likely to happen; and if it does, symposia would be superfluous.

The perception of a threat will affect Jews in the usual varied manner: some will exaggerate the danger, panic, and prepare to go on *aliyah*, convinced that the Zionist solution to the "Jewish problem" was correct after all. Others would strengthen the defense agencies and prepare to "fight anti-Semitism." Still others would minimize the danger, and indeed argue that any organized and public resistance would only intensify the danger.

American Jewry — Competing Loyalties

ARNOLD M. GOODMAN

WE ARE INDEBTED TO PROFESSOR AUERBACH for sharing with us feelings which have been aroused within him as a result of the tension between his Jewish agenda and the demands of the American (read Gentile) majority. He leaves no doubt as to his primary loyalties: he is first and foremost a Jew who relates to Israel as his home — even though he is an American. His belief that American Jewry and its leadership has a different set of priorities creates within him both concern and anger. While recognizing the tension of competing loyalties, I am much more sanguine regarding American Jewry's commitment both to its sense of Jewishness and to the survival of the State of Israel.

Auerbach's thesis that major Jewish organizations are falling over one another to embrace the Reagan plan (and, by implication, any other Administration plan) is not borne out by the facts. Some segments of American Jewish leadership are uncomfortable whenever there is a strain between Jews and the Gentile majority, but the vast number of Jews fully understand the uniqueness of being Jewish. Most American Jews are just not concerned with the issue of double loyalty. They perceive themselves as American citizens who have special interests often growing out of their Jewishness. Many Jews focus on the single interest of Israel. Having such interests — or interest — is consistent with American political traditions, provided that we accept democracy's one demand that, once a bottom line is arrived at, we all agree to adhere to it.

This, of course, is the rub: what if the bottom line is just not acceptable precisely because it demands that we abandon Israel to its demise or annihilation. Where, then, do we go from there, and what do we do?

In such a situation of loyalties in total conflict the choice that Jews will make will flow from their perception as to whom they belong. If they see themselves as Jewish Americans they would ultimately acquiesce to the American decision and live with Auerbach's worst-case scenario. I suspect, however, that significant numbers of Jews perceive themselves as American Jews whose Jewishness connects them with the past and present of our people. Being American, for them, results from a confluence of events and forces, but it is their Jewishness which is central to their being. Until we are faced with the worst-case scenario we can merely speculate

ARNOLD M. GOODMAN is rabbi of Ahavath Achim Synagogue in Atlanta and president of The Rabbinical Assembly of America.

whether the majority of the community is in the former group or in the latter.

Yet, regardless of which group we may be, most of us understand that the tension of being a minority is having to deal with the reality that the majority perceives you in ways other than you perceive yourself. To Israelis we may be Anglo-Saxons; but to Americans we are Jews. Yet, life in America is not bad. We enjoy freedom, prosperity and even the luxury of debating where our primary loyalties lie. I do not share Auerbach's *Weltanschauung* regarding the demands placed upon us by the Christian majority.

Anti-Semitism is certainly a factor in our lives, but I do not attribute it to our being perceived as having dual political loyalties. Anti-Semitism flows from Christian doctrine which has, as yet, not adequately resolved the Jewish role in the crucifixion and what our role might be in God's world. Passion plays still are performed in our society and, even without these plays, the passion is reenacted every Sunday in selections read from the Book of John and other Christian sources. The passion is certainly reenacted during Easter when the cry, "He has risen," carries with it the question of why he fell in the first place. This question calls all Jews to account, and it is this perception in Christian theology which continues to be the bedrock of anti-Semitism rather than our support for the State of Israel.

Auerbach's reference to our silent accommodation to the Gentile majority is overstated. We are quite visible and often very vocal. Our community was, of course, aroused by Lebanon. There was — and is — a difference of opinion about the propriety of that invasion, but there is little dispute that Sabra and Shatilla represent some moral failure to which we responded not as Americans but as Jews. The world does demand more from us, and this is a double standard which is discomfiting. The reality is, however, that we, too, demand more of ourselves because we have a perception of our Jewishness and because we see ourselves as a people committed to a level of morality which does not permit us to be a silent witness to the atrocities performed by others. When the world plays this card against us, the discomfort, we hope, is more than compensated for by our pride in being part of a "Kingdom of Priests and a Holy Nation."

While many American Jews are willing to accept the Reagan plan, I am convinced that American Jewry will not embrace any plan that does not enjoy the support of Israeli leadership. American Jews, sensitized by the lessons of the Holocaust, are aware of the limitations of compromising their interests to assure the protection of the host government, even one that has offered us the succor, sanctuary and equality of America.

Auerbach is correct that modernity offered Jews an opportunity to become more a part of society. This is reflected in our adapting to the dress, the diet, and even the devotional rhythm of the majority. Yet, with it all, something Jewish remains. It is often intangible and it frequently

defies definition, but it is there nonetheless. It is also obvious that, as individual practices have lapsed, community standards have become intensified. How else do we account for the prevailing practice that the public dinners within the Jewish community must be kosher?

We are less Jewish at home than we should be, but, at the same time, we are often more Jewish in the streets than we realize. This willingness to express our Jewishness outside is often solely manifested in American Jewry's support for Israel, whether financially or in other ways. In this context, more Jews than Auerbach realizes are prepared to share in the collective fate of the Jewish People.

Will they be there in the clutch? Will they be there if the bottom line arrived at by the democratic process demands abandonment of Israel? We cannot really be sure. I suspect that American Jewry would prove equal to the task of affirming its Jewishness, but all of us hope that we are never confronted with the trauma of having to find out for sure.

Multiple Loyalties Do Not Mean Disloyalty

PHILIP M. KLUTZNICK

MY FIRST RESPONSE TO THE INVITATION TO comment on Professor Auerbach's paper was a refusal to write my views lest they seem inconsiderate. When urged to do so, I re-read the paper and I inquired about the author. I realized the sincerity and depth of an honorable person's dilemma. So, I offer my views, hopeful that they may at least ease his uncertainty.

The present differences between the United States and Israel are not the first nor will they be the last. Israel is a sovereign state. As such, it acts in what its government believes to be its national interest. The United States is also sovereign, but it is also a superpower with many interests and friendly nations in addition to Israel with whom it consorts. Unfortunately, for the moment, Israel can look only to the United States, among the nations, for comfort and helpful strength.

It is normal for governments of friendly nations in this relationship to have conflicting views from time to time. Having a love for Israel and all it means to our Jewish people has to be separated from our agreement or disagreement with the acts of its government in power at a given time. The same applies to our loyalty to the United States.

I hope that Dr. Auerbach is not confusing his loyalty to the first Jewish nation in nearly 2,000 years or his love for the United States with its present or prior leaders. If he is, then his problem is simple — he should go to Israel forthwith. But, he will find there a considerable number of Israelis who agree more with United States policy on some critical matters than with their own government.

The dilemma — and the premise on which it is based, to a greater or lesser degree — is only a mirror of real life. The predictions of deepening displeasure with Israel and that Israel is always culpable do not stand up in the face of reality. Certainly, there are anti-Semites here and elsewhere in the world. Indeed, there are signs of growth in that historic phenomenon. But, the Congress has just demonstrated its combined support of Israel. The politicians claim that in the November elections Israel's supporters gained. We have the largest number of Jewish members in the Congress in history. They do not feel a problem of "dual" loyalty.

PHILIP M. KLUTZNICK is *President Emeritus of the World Jewish Congress, a former Secretary of Commerce, U.S.A., and a former United States Ambassador to the United Nation.*

Loyalty as an American does not foreclose Dr. Auerbach from criticism of our government and its misbehavior if he feels that it has misbehaved. On the other hand, feeling as he does about Israel does not obligate him to approve everything that its government does nor to criticize it unless he wants to do so. The only answer to his problem, if he feels that this is such a major conflict, is to choose one or the other. Since he prefers not to do so at this time, then let him learn to live with more than one loyalty. Every person has many loyalties. Perhaps he should read or re-read some of Dr. Mordecai Kaplan's works. It is his thesis that we Jews live in two civilizations. Fortunately, some of the founders of the Republic look upon it as "God's American Israel."

This is not the first disturbing difference between the United States and Israel. Let him read the history of 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973 and periods in between. We survived earlier conflicts as we will this traumatic experience. Picking who is right and who is wrong between two friendly nations is as dangerous as interfering between two lovers.

I have lived in this vortex of competing views for over forty years. There are moments, hours and weeks of anguish and torture. There were times, more serious than these, when some American Jews charged us with "dual loyalty," as did others. It is not dual loyalty to love and assist the land of our fathers and, at the same time, love and support the land of our citizenship and life. If one feels it so, then he owes it to himself to make a choice. The greater sin is to be dishonest with oneself.

No Escape from Hyphenation

MILTON R. KONVITZ

"CAN I POSSIBLY BE AN AMERICAN JEW," Professor Auerbach asks, "on terms that will satisfy the Christian majority, persistently seeking affirmations of loyalty . . .?" I do not know in what America Auerbach lives. I have lived in the United States practically all of my life and I have never felt that anyone was seeking an affirmation of my American loyalty. "To affirm my undivided loyalty as an American," he says, "I must suppress my competing allegiance as a Jew . . ." Is Auerbach living in a police state? Is he living in the U.S.S.R.?

I think that the basic trouble is that Auerbach is confusing disagreement with American governmental policies with disloyalty. Millions of Americans disagree with the United States Government over most important issues relating to military strength, disarmament, relations with the Soviet Union, the role of human rights in foreign policy, relations with the OPEC countries, not to mention domestic issues. Why should there not be disagreement over policies relating to the Middle East, Israel, Iran, Jordan, the Palestinians?

There is no inconsistency, (wrote Justice Louis Brandeis) between loyalty to America and loyalty to Jewry. . . . Let no American, (he wrote) imagine that Zionism is inconsistent with [American] patriotism. Multiple loyalties are objectionable only if they are inconsistent. A man is a better citizen of the United States for being also a loyal citizen of his state, and of his city; for being loyal to his family, and to his profession or trade; for being loyal to his college or his lodge. Every Irish American who contributed towards advancing home rule [for Ireland] was a better man and a better American for the sacrifice he made. Every American Jew who aids in advancing Jewish settlement in Palestine, though he feels that neither he nor his descendants will ever live there, will likewise be a better man and a better American for doing so.

Auerbach seems to be suffering from the fear that hyphenation *separates* cultures and peoples. Why doesn't he see the hyphen as a connection, as a bridge, as a coupling? Of course, hyphenation is no guarantee that the connection will be free from tension and stress, let alone occasional conflict. But all of life is made up of such terms. It is only the dead who are permanently separated from tensions, disputes, stresses and conflicts. Multiple loyalties can be multiple enrichments. A single loy-

MILTON R. KONVITZ is *professor of industrial and labor relations and professor of law, emeritus, at Cornell University. He is also a founder of JUDAISM, of which he is a contributing editor.*

alty can be a form of monomania. Only totalitarian governments, like those of the U.S.S.R. or Nazi Germany or theocratic Iran, insist on such narrowness of heart and mind.

In the famous Flag Salute Case of 1943, Justice Jackson said for the United States Supreme Court that Americans have the constitutional right to differ, and he went on to say:

But freedom to differ is not limited to things that do not matter much. That would be a mere shadow of freedom. The test of its substance is the right to differ as to things that touch the heart of the existing order. If there is any fixed star in our constitutional constellation, it is that no official, high or petty, can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion . . . (There must be, said Justice Jackson for the Court) no fear that freedom to be intellectually and spiritually diverse or even contrary will disintegrate the social organization.

Louis Marshall recorded a meeting that took place in the Cabinet Room of the White House with President Taft and other public officials, at which Marshall, Jacob Schiff and other Jewish leaders tried to persuade Taft to take steps to abrogate a treaty with Russia which discriminated against American Jews traveling in Russia. They were not able to persuade the President. When the conference broke up, Marshall recorded,

the various conferees shook hands with the President. Mr. Schiff alone refrained from greeting the President. As we went down the stairs he turned to me and said "This means war," and authorized me to draw on him to the extent of \$25,000, if necessary, for a fund to carry on a campaign to bring about the abrogation of the treaty.

That conference with Taft took place on February 15, 1911. When the efforts to have the treaty abrogated by the President failed, the Jewish leaders did not give up but turned to Congress, where their efforts led to favorable action in December of the same year. The action in Congress was by unanimous vote, and Taft went along.

In commenting on this happy result, Marshall wrote that the abrogation of the treaty of 1832

operates as the removal of the last civil disabilities to which the Jews of this country have been subjected. It adds to the value of American citizenship, by preserving its sanctity and integrity. It does away with an offensive classification of our citizens. . . . It is a lesson to all the world. . . .

Schiff and Marshall had no hesitation in disagreeing with the President of the United States. They saw no conflict of loyalties. Americans have a right to disagree among themselves, and Jews have a right to struggle on behalf of the rights and security of Jews, whether they are Jews living in Russia or in Israel.

There is no escape from hyphenation. Were Auerbach living in Israel he would be an *Israeli Jew*, and he would often be in disagreement with other Israelis, and would rightly resent anyone translating his disagreement into disloyalty.

Parallel Centers for Jewish Creativity

ANNE LAPIDUS LERNER

I, TOO, AM AN AMERICAN JEW. A CONSERVATIVE Jew, I live my life to the beat of Jewish time — rejoicing at the flowering of an unseen almond tree in the dead of winter. The holidays that I celebrate are, in part, tied to an agricultural calendar which was not intended for my Bergen County garden. My weekly day of rest is the best day for shopping and, alas, the malls and outlets are closed on Sunday in these parts. My palate, restricted by *kashrut*, has never tasted of the “flesh-pots” of *real* American cooking. Although I am not immediately identifiable as Jewish on the outside, I am clearly Jewish in my beliefs, values and practices, in my personal and professional life.

One aspect of my Jewishness is my support for the State of Israel. I am old enough, and my parents committed enough, to remember somewhat hazily the declaration of Israeli independence. The existence of the State of Israel has made a profound difference. It has allowed us to relax, to know that if, God forbid, things get bad here, we could always find a home there. It has given us a sense of pride to discover that we are a whole people — with a land, government, army, spoken language and even criminals. This, too, is a fulfillment of the desire for “normalcy.” The price exacted by the Emancipation for individual “normalcy” has been no higher than the price for national “normalcy.” We have given up some of our ideals, some of our distinguishing characteristics. When, for example, Micah described the ideal Jerusalem, it was the place to which all nations would come to “beat their swords into ploughshares,” not to buy armaments. Despite phenomenal Israeli achievements in many areas, despite its willingness to share the technology of peace and to take in the boat people, we may question some aspects of its foreign policy. Why, for example, does Israel maintain close relations with South Africa? An answer is not hard to come by, but it is couched in terms of *Realpolitik*, not prophecy.

Like any other human creation, the State of Israel is imperfect. While it embodies the Jewish dream of redemption, it does not do so completely. Confrontations between rock-throwing Sabbath-observers and soccer-loving secularists are not part of that dream. Similarly, the disregard for human life which lurks behind the high number of traffic fatalities is not

ANNE LAPIDUS LERNER is assistant professor of Hebrew literature and associate Dean of the Graduate School of the Jewish Theological Seminary.

part of the divine scheme. When Israeli and American Jews complain that, in the wake of Sabra and Shatila, Israel is held to a higher moral standard, they forget that that higher moral standard is what makes Jews “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

The flaws in Israel sometimes loom large, but that is only because of the dimension of the dream. The State of Israel and the period of pioneering which preceded its establishment accomplished incredible feats. The land — the parched parts and the swampy — was made arable and settled. The language — unspoken for centuries — was revived and expanded. The people — unaccustomed to the responsibilities of independence — were trained and educated. A diverse people without a common spoken language or a continuous common history was brought in and unified.

I have deep personal ties to the State of Israel through great-grandparents — one of whom was part of the *yishuv yashan*, the old religious settlement in Jerusalem; two others were among the founders of the pioneering settlement of Rishon leZion. Many of their descendants are still, or now again, in Israel. My brother, sister-in-law and their children live in Tsefat and are, as my brother puts it, “The fifth generation in Israel — with some gaps.” Could I adjust, as they have, to the inefficient bureaucracy, the lack of space, the cultural differences, the distance from family and friends and the knowledge that, unless some hoped-for change occurs, my children would fight in the Army? I suppose I could. If I care so much about Israel, why do I not live there? Why not enjoy the accomplishments and, instead of taking potshots from the sidelines, get involved in the struggle for improvement?

Despite my deep ties to Israel I remain here. Why? It is more comfortable here — and not merely materially. Like my parents, I was born in Boston and educated in its schools, secular and Jewish. All of my grandparents and two of my great-grandparents are buried in New England soil. While I am clearly not a Brahmin, I am at home in this country, except when, around the winter solstice, my landscape is transformed and I feel like an alien. Although my English and my Hebrew are both fluent, my “r-less” Boston accent goes over much better in English. This land, too, is in many ways my land, although it was not “made for” me.

To date, we have not had a real conflict of loyalties. While we may quibble with aspects of American foreign policy relating to Israel, we have been satisfied with American support for Israel, regardless of administration. Before each election Jewish votes are sought with promises which, whatever the intention, are not ever completely fulfilled. But the basic support for Israel is there, thanks to a confluence of American self-interest, support for a fledgling democracy with biblical connections and the presence of American Jewry as a small, but vocal and politically active minority. If basic American support for Israel were, God forbid, to change to antagonism, the situation would be altogether different.

The current situation allows me the luxury of considering whether or not my presence here can be justified in Jewish terms. The American exile is part of a tradition of parallel centers of Jewish creativity and development which goes back to the first Babylonian exile. Babylonia and Jerusalem have both been, as Rawidowicz argued, foci of the Jewish people. Babylonia, too, has an active role in the continuing drama of Jewish history. This exile has the potential for becoming a dynamic and creative force in Jewish life. Despite the high rates of assimilation and intermarriage, American Jewry can point with pride to a number of significant developments. Among these are the growth and development of Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist Judaism as alternatives to Orthodoxy, the *havurah* movement, Jewish feminism and the proliferation of Judaica offerings on American colleges and universities. These have all been extraordinary phenomena which constitute important contributions to Judaism as a whole. Each of these developments has grown out of a creative response to the tension of living in two worlds. For now, I choose to live in the Babylonia of our time.

When we bought our son a digital watch, he began to explore its capabilities. One of those is to show the time in two different time zones. Without hesitation he set the watch to show the time in Israel. And so do we.

Anti-Semitism — No Cause for Alarm

LEO PFEFFER

WHEN I WAS A PUPIL IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, my classmates and I were taught to take great pride in Stephen Decatur's famous saying: "Our Country: In her intercourse with foreign nations may she always be in the right; but our country, right or wrong." It was quite a number of years later before I realized that Americans did not have a patent on Decatur's patriotism, and that pupils in schools all over the world were taught the same amoral nationalism which, unless saner minds prevail, can bring us all to a nuclear Armageddon.

It is this that troubles me most about Professor Auerbach's article. There are many things relating to Israel in which, as American Jews or Jewish Americans, no matter how we choose to identify ourselves, we can take justifiable pride. One of these was the overwhelming refusal on the part of the Israeli people to allow blind nationalism to frustrate an uncontrolled and impartial inquiry into the question of Israel's guilt, if any, in the massacre at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps, and this even though there can be little doubt that Menachem Begin still commands a majority support in Israel in respect to his policies of expansionism.

I am at a loss to identify the "prominent Jewish organizations" in America that, according to Professor Auerbach, "are tumbling over each other in their eagerness to endorse the Regan plan" for the restoration of peace in the Near East. Unless the American press is concealing or distorting the facts, the furthest any major American Jewish organization has gone is to urge consideration of the plan as the first, but certainly not the final, step in an effort to negotiate a peaceful solution of the Lebanon crisis and Israeli-Arab tension in a way that will not endanger Israel's security. What I consider unjustifiable and inexcusable is Professor Auerbach's assertion that Jewish organizations are motivated by a felt need to demonstrate "what good Americans they are."

In the case of *Sicurella v. United States* (1955), the United States Supreme Court ruled that members of the Jehovah's Witnesses sect who believed all wars this side of Armageddon to be sinful and against God's will were entitled to exemption from military service. Professor Auerbach, I suggest, should be no less generous to the substantial number of Satmar hasidim residing in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn (or

LEO PFEFFER is professor of political science, Long Island University, and special counsel for the American Jewish Congress.

Neturei Karta in Jerusalem) who, from time to time, place conspicuous advertisements in the New York Times, condemning not only the incursion into Lebanon but the concept of a state of Israel before the coming of the Messiah. To condemn these hasidim as not belonging "to the Jewish people" and being "effete" as were German Jews who claimed "that they were Germans of the Mosaic persuasion," does them a grave injustice, even though their Messianic theology is not shared by the majority of Americans Jews or even of hasidim.

I am an unredeemed pacifist who shares Benjamin Franklin's categorical imperative that there never has been, nor can there be, a good war or a bad peace. But even if I were less dogmatic in this respect, I would find it difficult to accept Professor Auerbach's mandate that if you are unable to endorse what may or may not have happened at Sabra and Shatila refugee camps then you must keep quiet. Isaiah could hardly have been charged with want of empathy for Israel when he cried that for Zion's sake he could not be silent nor for the sake of Jerusalem could he keep quiet.

I share the indignation of most Jews, but alas of only few non-Jews, in the fact that while at worst Israel's role in the camp slaughters could have been no more than secondary, there has been a curtain of silence in respect to the major role played by the Lebanese Christians. The most facile explanation for this strange silence is anti-Semitism, and one can hardly deny that some remnants of this plague are still to be found in the United States, as perhaps in all other countries outside Israel.

Nevertheless, I prefer another and I think more realistic explanation for American reaction to the events in Lebanon. I think that America expects of Jews and of Israel a higher degree of morality than is manifested by the Lebanese Christians or the Arabs. It was Judaism, not Christianity or Islam, that gave western civilization the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos and Micah. I suggest, therefore, that we should take pride, rather than bewail the reality, that higher standards of morals and justice are imposed upon Israel and on Jews than those found acceptable in respect to other nations and peoples.

Happily, Professor Auerbach does not attribute to American anti-Semitism his yearning for Israel. Jews in the United States have never been as secure and accepted as they are today. The occasional smearing of swastikas on synagogues doors and the vandalism that sometimes accompanies them are more often attributable to youths who probably have no idea what a swastika signifies other than that Jews don't like it. When I attended law school at New York University there was but one Jew on the faculty. Today, the dean of the school is Jewish, as are his counterparts in many other highly-rated law schools. Professor Auerbach is department chairman in a college which, in my day, would not admit Jews even as full tuition-paying students.

I say this because I think it unfortunate to attribute to anti-Semitism,

latent or patent, the widespread opposition to the expansionist ambitions of the Begin government. It is particularly unfair in respect to the United States, which so often appears to be the only friend that the Begin government has in the United Nations. More important, it does irreparable damage to the free exchange of ideas — indeed, it smacks either of hysterics or blackmail — to invoke the spectre of anti-Semitism whenever a proposal unsatisfactory to the Israeli government, or even to a majority of its population, is presented. There is not much that I can find to say for President Reagan, but I am certain that he is not an anti-Semite or the innocent tool of anti-Semites.

By the same token, I think that Jews, in both the United States and Israel, are unwise if they allow the fear of anti-Semitism to influence their positions in respect to the Reagan-or any other-proposal for solving Israel-Arab problems. I say this on the basis of the American Jewish community's experience in the struggle to maintain the separation of church and state in respect to religion in the public schools and the use of tax-raised funds to support religious schools. In 1948, the constituents of the Synagogue Council of America and the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council were faced with a proposal by the American Jewish Congress that they join in a friends-of-the-court brief supporting a suit challenging religious instruction in the public schools. Some of the constituent organizations expressed fear that such intervention would aggravate anti-Semitism. They were outvoted, and history has fairly well established that anti-Semitism was *not* aggravated by this decision. The evidence to support this conclusion lies in the fact that in later cases involving prayer in the public schools and aid to religious schools, the Jewish organizations manifested no fear of anti-Semitism in deciding on intervention.

For myself, there are many good reasons for opposing Begin expansionism, but the fear of anti-Semitism is not one of them.

“Dual Loyalty” is Oversimplification

EMANUEL RACKMAN

WITH PROFESSOR AUERBACH'S CONCLUSION I agree. However, I do not share his anguish. Perhaps it is because I regard the problem as typical of the human situation.

Long ago I reconciled myself to the fact that I must live with many loyalties which often come into conflict with each other and, as in the case of all moral decisions, sometimes I decide in favor of one and, at other times, in favor of another. In almost every moral decision there are many loyalties that come into conflict — and most of life consists of decision-making between conflicting loyalties. The problem may involve commitment to values, to family, to community, to country, to humanity. Often, choices must be made. And one is not always consistent in one's choices. When I volunteered for military service I placed my loyalty to my values and my country ahead of my loyalty to my family. Yet, in countless other situations, I declined to take risks precisely because of my regard for my family.

It is absurd to generalize as to what loyalty must always come first. Very often my attachment to the United States prompts me to support her while, in other situations I must say that, because she is acting immorally or unwisely, I will oppose her decisions.

There is no democratic doctrine that mandates support of national policy simply because a majority has willed it. To dissent in a democracy is one of the greatest privileges we enjoy. And if I may not dissent, then I no longer live in a democracy.

However, let us consider a hypothetical situation. Saudi Arabia declares that it will sell no more oil to the West unless the United States forces Israel either to internationalize Jerusalem or surrender it to Moslem control. The oil companies warn us that the Saudi decision is one that the United States must accept. Otherwise, the economy of the United States will collapse, tens of millions will be unemployed and the resultant human suffering will be indescribable. How should the Jews of the United States react? If they support Israel's refusal to do the bidding of the United States, are they not placing the interests of Israel ahead of the interest of the United States?

This hypothetical case is as dramatic as it is conceivable. What I like about the example is that it places into focus the concept of “national

EMANUEL RACKMAN is President of Bar Ilan University.

interest.” What is the “national interest” in any country? Is it what the majority of citizens believe is to their advantage? Are the wishes of the majority all that counts? And is what the majority wants necessarily in its own interest? Is it not possible that the majority wants what is bad for it — and for the rest of us? (Echoes of Socrates in Plato’s *Republic*.)

Perhaps a minority in the United States believes that yielding to Saudi Arabia is submitting to blackmail. Perhaps the real “national interest” calls for resistance to such terrorism for the sake of America’s future security. Perhaps a minority believes that it is better to suffer temporary privation until more effective solutions can be found. Perhaps a minority believes, as some Fundamentalist Christians are already arguing, that the oil companies are pulling the wool over the eyes of Americans and that the time has come to destroy the oil cartels even at the cost of reorienting the economy and some initial suffering.

In short, a minority has the right to question whether the majority actually knows what is the real “national interest.” Despite the minority dissent, the majority may decide to act on its own judgment. In that case, the minority has no choice but to accept the majority decision. But are its members precluded from expressing how they feel? Can they not continue to argue that the majority is in error, that the majority is immoral, that the majority is cowardly, that the majority is betraying the historic “Manifest Destiny” of the United States?

Are those in the minority any less loyal citizens because they differ as to what is the true “national interest” (about which I believe Charles Beard once wrote a book)? Incidentally, what about the interests of future generations of Americans? Does a current majority have the right to forfeit what might well be in the best interests of its posterity? May I not voice my wish that the United States not do now that which might well embarrass it in the eyes of our offspring at a later date — as our children are now ashamed of what our nation did, and did not do, during the Holocaust?

The fallacy implicit in the charge of “dual loyalty” is that of oversimplification. Our enemies use a slogan to attack a complex position and the slogan effectively silences those who want to adopt the position. However, on closer analysis even the most disturbing hypothetical case shows no need for Jews to be frightened into believing that they might be hyphenated Americans.

Of course, Jews must also consider what is in the best interest of others — not only Americans but all people, those who are gone, those who still live and those yet to be born. Just as it is incorrect to assume that what a majority of Americans want automatically makes a particular course of conduct right — even when it is unjust and unwise — so it is incorrect to assume that what a majority of Jews want is always right. To discover and do what is right in the eyes of God and man has always been a Jewish goal and one of the most difficult to attain.

However, sloganeering or surrendering to it is hardly the way to get

there. Every situation must be analyzed individually and the implicit moral issues must be reckoned with. Conflicting interests must be evaluated, accommodating to them if possible. Sometimes, one must be sacrificed for another. But never should one say that what a majority wants should, therefore, come first. This lesson in ethics is one that *all* of humanity must learn. It is a lesson which is vital to the philosophy and survival of democratic government.

Nonetheless, Professor Auerbach has added one consideration which one must not ignore. In the moral decision there is an emotional element. The decision is rarely exclusively rational. Indeed, the rational element may be *ex post facto* — a rationalization of the verdict of the heart. Yet, just as Americans recognize my right to decide at times in favor of family and against the interest of the nation, so Jews do not have to be apologetic when they favor their kin. We are a family — precisely as Professor Auerbach describes us. On this very theme Professor Michael Wyschogrod has written an impressive paper, still unpublished. But his conclusion is irrefutable — our ties with each other are basically because we are the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob either by birth or by adoption. Anti-Semites will not like that decision. We may suffer because of it. But when did we not suffer because of our uniqueness!

Loyalty

ANNE ROIPHE

IF ONE'S PARENTS ARE FIGHTING, IF HARSH sounds or ugly silences haunt the corners of the house or are served at the table with the evening meal, of course there is a special kind of anguish, a sense of structures tumbling and terrible choices that might have to be made. The loyalty issue between America and Israel, even the possibility of such a loyalty issue, affects some Jews just that way. It raises spectres of anti-Semitism fueled by images of the Jewish world, clannish, treacherous, hostile to its host nation. It provokes guilt whichever way a Jewish-American or an American-Jew turns.

In thinking about where my own final loyalty rests I discovered that I could never love any government at all. I do not owe my life, my children, to any nation, if in using that word we mean a flag, a system of government, or a piece of geography. That is jingoism, patriotism, 19th century simplistic nationalism, the kind that animated the souls of the good German citizens in 1933. I could not be loyal to the America that massacred the Indians in the Dakotas and gave small pox-infected blankets to the tribes of New England. I could not be loyal to the America that imported slaves to plantations in the Carolinas, or the America we know in Vietnam, in Chile, in El Salvador. I am not loyal to the America of the C.I.A. or the F.B.I. that taps the phones of nuclear disarmament committee members. I cannot feel that a nation, merely a government of flawed human beings, could ever demand my absolute loyalty. It is better served by skepticism, distance, scrutiny. For these reasons I cannot be unquestioningly loyal to the particular government in Israel today. The government of Israel and the government of America are only as good, as worthy of allegiance, as their capacity to stay near, to follow the animating ideas behind them, the vision of equity that we pursue through time like so many donkeys dreaming of carrots.

This appears to beg the issue, but not quite. Israel, the Zionist dream, a Jewish state, a redemption, a light for others in darker places, a just and moral country with Jewish ethics, the Jewish capacity in full bloom, a return that marks the beginning of better ways to be human, that idea claims my absolute loyalty. On the other hand, so does the Constitution of the United States, the Bill of Rights, the Jeffersonian sense of order. These American principles have earned my respect and this respect

ANNE ROIPHE *is a writer.*

mingles with the gratitude that I feel toward a country that took in my impoverished family and permitted them so much.

But what if these two loyalties in real political power terms compete with each other? What if the interests of both countries (not ideals) are in opposition to each other? Well, I would not be loyal to a father who abused his child. I would not be loyal to a woman who endangered her younger sister. If America, for some imagined gains in a balance of power, for some cruel reason of its own, turned finally and irrevocably against Israel then it would only be a matter of hours before all of our suitcases were packed. If, however, the particular human government in Israel behaves as badly as America did in the early days of its own nation-building then I would prefer to wait before debarking. I would remain loyal to the Zionist dream but I would not wish to join in tearing it down, in subverting it by destroying other people's homes or other people's sense of history or place.

But what is the bottom line? What if the political situation demands that I compromise ideals and make a choice? Then the scale tips towards Israel, the country, the political place, the vision all together. In America we have shared in a brief history. We have been well treated. We have given a great deal in return for the opportunities provided. As part of the diaspora we may serve a fine purpose in America, we may dally here for centuries more, but our particular Jewish nation is not one that has depended on geography or government. It is a particular civilization with a particular memory and a particular cosmic purpose. It is to this nation that we fundamentally belong. Our loyalty is not really torn between America-the-Beautiful or Israel-the-complicit-in-the-massacres-in-Lebanon or between the Israel-that-made-the-desert-fertile and America-the-supplier-of-torture-machines-to-South-American-regimes. Our loyalty remains where it has always been, within the Jewish spirit, within the Jewish experience. This may require one or another kind of action, depending on what political cards are on the table.

Israel, not the military state, but the spiritual Israel, has survived because of the remarkable Jewish gift for abstraction. To worship blindly the human state is to worship the golden calf, to make sacrifices to man-made pufferies; to hold the Jewish nation to territory or military considerations is to slip into idolatry. That is not to dismiss the land of Israel and its significance to us.

I am almost shocked by what I have written here. I, after all, am an exclusively English speaking person. One of my earliest memories is of reciting the first paragraphs of the Declaration of Independence at a school assembly. My vacations have been spent in purple mountains' majesty and my intellectual history goes through Hawthorne and Melville on to Yankee ball games, maple sugar and Thanksgiving turkeys and, yet, I feel that we are just visitors here on an open-ended visa. Yes, partly the statement is prompted by the lessons of the Holocaust and the experience

of the German Jews, but that's not all. There is a particular Jewish way of being in history and it began in a particular place and was always connected by a vital thread to Sinai and, so, despite the fact that my personal identity has taken on the chameleon colors of an American woman, I know that in the generations to come my line may be reeled in. My loyalty is finally Zionist, not us against them, but us as a special star in the wide wide sky. If this thought estranges me slightly from the Pilgrims, the pioneers, the vast variety of lumps in the melting pot of America, then I must be honest and say it — even if it is impolitic to do so. In the long run it is best to know who one really is and where one really stands. Sometimes the chameleon sitting on a leaf thinks he is a leaf. That is a sad illusion.

The Key is the Covenant

HERMAN E. SCHAALMAN

HAD THE FOOTNOTE TO THE ARTICLE "AMERICAN Jew" not identified its author as chairman of a department of history, reading his statement would not likely have led one to suspect that he is a professional historian. There is, at times, a snideness of tone: "prominent Jewish organizations tumbling over each other . . .", "the effete way that German Jews . . ." There are errors of fact such as the assertion that the Reagan plan is being "offered when the . . . idea of Jordan as *the* Palestian state had just begun to circulate," as though that notion did not have a relatively long history; or that the Christian majority was "persistently seeking affirmation of loyalty" from the Jewish minority, a claim which surely is not supported by anything that the author adduces, or that recent reading and experience would substantiate. And even the Hebrew quotation is, to my knowledge, not a quotation and, moreover, is grammatically incorrect.

The identification of the author as a historian is a disservice to him. If his statement were merely the opinion of a Jew in serious inner turmoil over unresolved issues of conflicting loyalties one could accept it as such and feel sympathy for his distress. For a historian, however, to state that "to affirm my undivided loyalty as an American I must suppress (sic!) my competing allegiance as a Jew" leads to the astounding conclusion that he has not heard about pluralism, or that he dismisses without argument multiple loyalties, Justice Brandeis' famous statement, etc. Tell that to a Greek-American, or an Irish-American, or a Jew!

Surely, there is an element in American society which coined the slogan: Love it or leave it. But just as surely that is not all of America or its dominant tone setters. It is my experience that many Americans, perhaps most, understand that people have diverse sets of loyalties, and that it is precisely the uniqueness of America to take that possibility for granted.

Nowhere does Auerbach give reasons for his statements that his Jewishness and his American citizen's loyalty are "competing" interests, or that the Reagan plan is "incompatible with the interests of the Jewish people." Says who? And why? A most persuasive argument can be made, and has been made, that many aspects of the Reagan plan may reflect the best interests of the Jewish people. It is true that the present government of Israel is unhappy with it but that is not the totality of the Jewish people.

HERMAN E. SCHAALMAN is rabbi of Congregation Emanuel, Chicago, and a former president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

Even within the Israel government there were, and are, those who would not reject the Reagan plan *in toto* as “incompatible with the interests of the Jewish people.”

Auerbach writes as though the *Shoah* had never happened, and as though it and the creation of the State of Israel had not caused the most significant change in the attitude and posture of American Jews towards themselves and their non-Jewish environment. I do not find “the Jewish minority usually all too eager to provide . . . satisfaction for the Christian majority.” Quite the contrary, there is sometimes the need today to tone down some of the feistiness of Jews both organized and private. If anything, many American Jews today have succumbed to triumphalism. Most Jews I know don’t feel that they “subject (themselves) to accusations of dual loyalty” when they affirm their “deepest loyalty to the Jewish people.”

That may be Auerbach’s dilemma and fear but he has no business projecting it on to the entire American Jewish community, claiming it as their main or exclusive response pattern. His difficulty is revealed when he wrestles himself into the confession: “but if I must choose, I will choose as a Jew.” What else is expected of him and us? That is the whole point. We ought to make all basic, and not so basic, decisions as Jews. That is the right, the only right way! That is when Judaism operates and is effective. That is no painful conclusion! It is our glory and our contribution to this blessed land and its future. That is our assignment in this world. That is our destiny.

It ought also to be clear by now that when Jews speak of religion they have their own definition, their own sense of the word. We are long past the position (*pace* the historian) when we consider Judaism a Church on the Christian model. When Jews speak of religion they include the peoplehood of Israel as the indispensable central element bound up with an equal tie to the creating, revealing, redeeming God. That is the essence of the covenant. Some Jews never deviated from it. Others, such as Reform Jews ever since the Columbus Platform of 1936, or nearly half a century now, have rediscovered and affirmed that truth. The old Napoleonic trade-off was a beginning, a first, starting position. We have moved beyond it decisively. It is flogging a dead horse to remind us that one ought not “to compress Judaism into a religion,” without knowing or acknowledging the historic steps which Jews have taken beyond that proposition, and without taking into account our own Jewish use and understanding of “religion.”

Finally, isn’t it about time, and particularly for a historian, to eschew that cheap shot at the Jews of Germany? God knows that they paid most dearly for their mistake of judgment, not to mention the fact that they had no model to follow when emancipation came. They were its pioneers, its testers. That many of them took a wrong turn our hindsight confirms. As victims of their mistake they deserve not snideness, but understanding, even sympathy.

Loyalties Are Always Complex

HAROLD M. SCHULWEIS

PROFESSOR AUERBACH HAS NO REAL CHOICES to make. He perceives the world in which he lives as split into “good” and “bad” and assigns each its separate country: “good” Israel and “bad” America. No integration is allowed. If America is nothing but a place in which to lodge the body, and Israel is his heart and soul, if American interests are Bechtel’s and, a priori, prejudiced against Israel’s, if loyalty to America means disloyalty to the Jewish people — what real choice is left for him? He has presented himself and us with what the late Walter Kaufmann called “loaded options.” Auerbach’s paper is replete with hard disjunctives that he senses in others or in himself: either love America or leave it; either be an American Jew or a Jewish American; either hold a single loyalty or be guilty of betrayal.

For most Jews the Jewish condition is more complex and subtly textured. America is admittedly no *goldene medinah* (which country is?), but it is no *treife medinah* whose Christian majority seeks to intimidate the Jewish minority. For most Jews, America is not just a place for the body. It is respected and admired for its performance and promise as a free and open society. That in the last two decades the number of Jews elected to Congress has tripled is a noteworthy statistic. The election of thirty-eight Jews to the new Congress, thirty to the House of Representatives and eight to the Senate does not square with the melancholy isolation of a Jew in America that Auerbach describes. The effectiveness of Jewish political action committees in contributing to the election of candidates who supported Israel and the result of polls and surveys indicating the incredibly supportive posture of non-Jews vis-à-vis Israel do not jibe with Auerbach’s sense of alienation.

He is not alone among Jews who are uncomfortable with good news. Perhaps it is part of the *kayn ayin hara* syndrome, the safe silence of the ever-dying eternal people. But when its superstitions are visited upon the real state of affairs and are used to argue choices, we must open our eyes to examine the state of affairs. No one denies that there are strains in holding in harness multiple and, at times, conflicting pulls of interest. But such tensions are not restricted to Jews in America and need not call for dropping the reins. Which thoughtful Hispanic or black in white America, which serious Catholic in Protestant America is not engaged in

HAROLD M. SCHULWEIS is *rabbi of Valley Beth Shalom, Encino, Calif.*

balancing interests and values? But the alternative is not love it or leave it — unless it is secretly willed.

What is worrisome to me about Auerbach's presentation is its denigration of America and over-idealization of Israel. Such splitting is unfair to both societies and to Auerbach himself. The bifurcating may remove the political tensions of the moment but it will return to haunt us more seriously. Over-idealization of Israel sows the seeds of the double standard against which Auerbach rages. Furthermore, it places a burden of our utopian expectations upon the shoulders of a human society. To impose one's ideals of perfection upon the life of others creates all kinds of problems. Over-idealization sets the stage for disillusionment, and disappointment is often a prelude to rage and derision. Satan was once an angel. His fall was brought about by over-expectation. Over-idealization of persons or states courts idolatry. It prevents men and societies from admitting error and denies the right of those who love maturely to criticize and to seek repair. Over-idealization tends to transform elected leaders into gods and to convert dissenters into demons. Auerbach seeks relief from the ambiguities, ambivalences and tensions of being Jewish in America by pledging a single unconditional loyalty. But on the issue confronting him he is likely to find no more ease in Zion than in America. Loyalties are multiple and complex. Both/and is more difficult than either/or but its integration is both truer and more rewarding in the present Jewish condition in the world.

We Can Live With Ambiguity

DANIEL JEREMY SILVER

I SHARE JEROLD AUERBACH'S PERCEPTION that the President's Middle East peace proposal is another bit of evidence that powerful segments of the American society are distancing themselves from Israel. The preemptive strike into Lebanon accelerated this movement, but, as the earlier AWACs debacle made abundantly clear, it has been going on for some time. In and out of the administration there are those who feel that certain Israeli policies adversely affect our national interest. In their view, the West Bank and Jerusalem are not worth putting the oil and markets of the Arab world at risk.

I do not share Auerbach's suggestion that we may be nearing the time when America's Jews must make an either/or choice between loyalties. This administration, despite its clear desire to appease certain Arab governments and interests, still speaks of the United States' unconditional commitment to Israel's survival and backs up these words with several hundreds of millions of dollars in aid and grants. In international politics a small country may be done in by its "friends." None of us should ever forget Munich, but, at the moment, there is little evidence that America's Jews are living in an enemy camp.

In his provocative little book, *Between Right and Right*, A.B. Yehoshua argues that the Jewish people voluntarily entered the diaspora and have voluntarily remained there. Yehoshua, rightly I believe, insists that Jewish communities spread across the Middle East for the usual reasons why people move about: war, commerce and economic opportunity, and remained in the diaspora even during periods when return was possible for much the same kinds of reasons. He is, however, off the mark when he dismisses the diaspora as a self-inflicted festering wound which cries out to be healed by a total ingathering. In my view, membership in the Jewish people is a spiritual commitment which does not require me to live at a particular address. The complementary existence of Israel and the diaspora present the Jewish people with the strongest strategic and spiritual situation in which they could find themselves. We benefit from the cross fertilization of perspective and the fact that we have not put all our eggs in one basket. *Shelilut ha-golah* is a program which would weaken, rather than strengthen, our people. Israel requires the diaspora, the diaspora

DANIEL JEREMY SILVER is adjunct professor of religion at Case Western Reserve and Cleveland State University, and rabbi of The Temple, Cleveland.

requires Israel and, since I believe that events conform to a higher design, the world requires both.

Auerbach finds that the Administration has taken some unfortunate steps in its relations with Israel and he is right, but the President's displeasure with Mr. Begin's settlement policy is not the whole story. We have to consider also the American position on the PLO, the continuing flow of aid and arms, and the support of Israel in various world forums. In a democracy, few citizens are ever completely satisfied on any major issue: but, for a democracy to work, the opposition must stay home, stand up and be heard. We would still be in Vietnam if everyone who was opposed to the war had gone to Canada.

Auerbach believes that tensions between Washington and Jerusalem will increase, and he is probably right; but when he suggests that American-Israel tensions may have reached a point which will make it impossible for us to sustain the ambiguities which attend our role as American Jews, I believe that he is over-reacting. President Reagan's September Peace Plan, which so disturbs Auerbach, is not evidence of a let's-do-in-Israel policy as much as evidence of incredible naivete. Mr. Reagan believes that a reasonable compromise can be cut which will dissolve the bitter emotions which have led to so much bloodshed. I wish that he were right, but that is not the way things happen in the mideastern jungle. Half a loaf will not satisfy an Arab world that is on its muscle.

I am not particularly troubled that our identity as American Jews is problematic. Membership in the Jewish people has always involved us in a network of ambiguous loyalties if only because it is a commitment to religious principle as well as to community. Even in Israel I would not escape ambiguity. There, though a rabbi, I would be forced to consider myself *lo-dati*.

Auerbach is certainly right that American Jews can no longer assume the support of the larger society, but, again, I doubt that the situation has deteriorated to the point that, to use his words, the link between these loyalties will snap. His reaction says more about the abnormality of the past several decades than about the current state of affairs. American Jews were spoiled by the brief post-1948 honeymoon during which America's and Israel's interests seemed fully compatible.

Auerbach's methodological problem is that he has mixed apples and oranges — loyalties which are different in kind. My American citizenship involves legal obligations. My membership in the Jewish people is unenforceable, and the absence of a second, and conflicting legal entanglement, allows me to maintain these sometimes competing loyalties. Both commitments have meaning for me, though the absence of enforceable constraints in my Jewish commitment consecrates it in a special way; it is voluntary, of the heart.

I must add that neither loyalty is unqualified. As an American citizen I am surrounded by a network of laws, taxes and social restraints and I do

not subscribe to all of these programs and policies. As a Jew, I am caught up in a network of institutional and communal ties, and, again, I maintain my involvement even though I consciously disapprove of some institutions and activities. Loyalty involves loving concern and lasting commitment to a group's existence, strength and survival, not marching in lock step.

I can live within these ambiguities because none is unconditional, because my loyalties ultimately derive from the loyalty that I owe to myself, to my soul and to my God. Whenever I choose between conflicting claims, as I must often do, my choice begins in a commitment which lies beyond all institutional loyalties.

A time may come when the either/or choice that Auerbach suggests may have to be faced. No one can guarantee that America will remain a viable democracy or that Israel may not become an intolerable theocracy. But that is not the case today. God never told us that being Jewish would be easy, only that it would be rewarding. Moreover, to close on a practical note, the strength of the Jewish people requires stronger and more effective representation by America's Jews, not premature and unwarranted throwing in of the towel. No administration remains in power forever or gets all it wants from Congress — *vide*: the December debate over the level of foreign aid that Israel should receive.

There Need Be No Conflict

WALTER S. WURZBURGER

PROFESSOR AUERBACH DESERVES OUR GRATITUDE for his courage in challenging the shopworn cliché to which we almost instinctively resort in answering allegations that Jews with Zionist commitments are subject to dual loyalties. We have become so indoctrinated with Justice Brandeis' formulation that our loyalties to Judaism and the Jewish people reinforce and enhance our adherence to American democratic ideals and institutions that we cannot conceive of a possible conflict between our respective loyalties.

Recent strains in United States-Israel relations, which came to the fore especially during the AWACS debate, have, however, aroused us from our dogmatic slumbers. We can no longer complacently take for granted pre-established harmony between our obligations as American citizens and our ties with the Jewish people. We must face the very real possibility that the national interests of the United States may clash with those of the State of Israel.

So far, we have been fortunate. American foreign policy, both on moral and strategic grounds, has been largely supportive of Israel. We have been spared the agonizing dilemmas confronting British and French Jewries when their governments pursued anti-Israel policies. But there always remains the danger that, sooner or later, divergent claims of national interest will drive a wedge between the United States and Israel. How, then, shall Jews react?

The problem is by no means a novel one. Although it has become aggravated in the wake of the establishment of the sovereign State of Israel, it actually antedates the beginning of the Emancipation. After all, civil rights were conferred upon Jews only on the basis of the fiction that being Jewish was a purely denominational matter. The admission ticket to modern society — as evidenced by the replies of the French Sanhedrin to the questions submitted by Napoleon to determine the eligibility of French Jews for citizenship — was the tacit agreement that being Jewish possessed only religious, but not national or ethnic, significance.

The Holocaust glaringly revealed the absurdity of this myth. Jews were annihilated not because they held certain beliefs, or ideas or ideals, but solely because they were Jews. In the wake of this tragedy, there could no longer be any doubt that Jews were a people, not just a religious

WALTER S. WURZBURGER is rabbi of Congregation Shaaray Tefila, Lawrence, N.Y., former president of the Synagogue Council of America and editor of *Tradition*.

denomination. Jews certainly constitute a community of fate — even in the absence of a shared faith.

As the well-known U.J.A slogan proclaims, “We Are One.” Since we share a sense of kinship and solidarity with our fellow Jews all over the world, it is the height of folly to pretend that we identify *exclusively* with the interests and priorities of our own country or the welfare of its citizens. As Jews, we are vitally concerned and involved with the fate and destiny of Jews everywhere. Even *aliyah* would not completely eliminate conceivable areas of conflict between our allegiance to a political state and our obligations to the Jewish people. There is no guarantee that the perceived self-interests of the State of Israel will always coincide with those of the Jewish people as a whole. It is not beyond the realm of possibility that an Israeli citizen, too, may be torn between his loyalty to the State and his moral obligations to Jews elsewhere.

This should hardly be surprising. Even in Israel Jews live in an unredeemed world where we simply cannot overcome the sense of alienation which is the hallmark of the Jewish, and, for that matter, of the human condition. Regardless of where we reside, be it the United States or the Land of Israel, we cannot expect to enjoy the kind of idyllic conditions which rule out the very possibility of conflict among our various loyalties. In the real world, as long as we insist that political obligations must be subordinated to moral and religious values, we can never subscribe to the formula, “My country, right or wrong!” No political entity can ever be legitimately acknowledged as an absolute moral authority.

Fortunately, the imperatives of a loyal citizenship do not include idolization of the state. In order to discharge one’s political obligations, one need not adopt the Hobbesian model and regard the state as a Leviathan swallowing up all other concerns. Disobedience of unjust laws is generally regarded as fully compatible with the requirements of good citizenship.

This being the case, American Jews are fully entitled to consider themselves loyal American citizens in spite of the fact that they can conceive of the theoretical possibility of the occurrence of a state of affairs (say, a war between the United States and Israel) where our political obligations to the United States would conflict with our religio-ethico-ethnic commitments to the State of Israel. But as long as there is no major confrontation between America and Israel, nothing need prevent American Jews from giving their undivided political loyalty and allegiance to the United States. For while we regard the State of Israel as the pre-eminent instrumentality of creative Jewish survival in our era, our relationship to that State is completely apolitical. We do not serve in its army, nor pay its taxes, nor vote in its elections. We are bound to the State of Israel only by religio-ethical concerns.

These bonds, extraneous though they may be to the national interests of the United States, are by no means incompatible with the requirements of American patriotism and citizenship. Only totalitarian societies insist

that all values must be subservient to the needs of the state. In a democratic society, it is taken for granted that individuals have their own legitimate personal interests and values which coexist with concern for the common good. Jews need not be embarrassed because they advocate policies which, from their perspective, are deemed morally desirable, even though they may arise from considerations other than American self-interest. In the long run, countries function best when, instead of being exclusively preoccupied with narrow considerations of national self-interest, they are responsive to far broader moral concerns.

As long as the interests of the State of Israel are merely divergent from, but not in outright opposition to, those of the United States, American Jews really have no problem. The situation, of course, would be different if an actual conflict of interests between the two countries were to arise and we would be left with no alternative but to choose sides. How we would cope when confronted with such agonizing dilemmas cannot be predicted at this stage. We hope and pray, however, that our response would reflect religio-ethical principles rather than expediency.

I am, however, confident that rationality and morality will prevail both in Israel and the United States to such an extent that the specter of a major confrontation between the two countries will remain solely a mere theoretical possibility. Rather than speculate on contingency plans for such a catastrophe, it would be far more productive and prudent to invest our energies in efforts designed to prevent such a tragedy.

In all probability, within the foreseeable future, American Jews will continue to enjoy conditions where they, as members of the Jewish people, can function as exemplary American citizens. I therefore categorically reject all attempts to promote *aliyah* on the basis of the inevitability of a conflict between Americanism and Judaism.

But it is one thing to assert that living in America is a viable option for Jews and another to delude ourselves into thinking that we do not labor under very serious handicaps. America, after all is said and done, is still *galut*. An ideal Jewish life is possibly only in Israel. To be sure, short of the arrival of the Messianic Age, even life in Israel is still a form of *galut*. But there is still a difference in degree if not in kind. The opportunities for creative *Jewish* living offered by Israel are far superior to those available under the best of American conditions.

It is one thing to advocate *aliyah* because we are captivated by the magic of Erez Yisrael and lured by the beckoning opportunity to take our part in the building of a Jewish society, and another to become so obsessed with the alleged self-contradictions inherent in American Jewish life as to feel constrained to pronounce its inevitable demise.

Notwithstanding the intrinsic limitations besetting the American Jewish community, the pluralistic setting of American society makes it possible for us to participate fully in political, civil and cultural life without pretending that we are merely Americans of the Jewish faith.

Torah and the Megabombs

JOSEPH POLAK

CLASSICAL JUDAISM HAS MUCH TO SAY ABOUT warfare. It offers criteria by which it is possible to determine which kinds of war are legitimate and which are not. It poses rules regarding the conduct of war — who may fight, who may not; the conduct of the soldier before, during, and after battle; the treatment of the enemy, of prisoners, and so forth.¹

Yet, if the majesty and morality of these traditions do not fail to stir us, as rules of conduct during a nuclear war, many of them fade into insignificance. In a nuclear war there are no soldiers, no prisoners, no victors. There is a flash, then nausea, another flash and then a series of silences. The first silence is described by a survivor of Hiroshima as follows: "After the escapes, and the failure to escape the firestorm, a silence fell over the city and its population." And after that silence perhaps then another, and then a final silence — what we might call the absurd silence, for there are no listeners left in the world. The human race has been extinguished, the ecosphere which protects the world from the sun is gone, and, together with it, life as we understand it on the planet earth.²

There are fifty thousand nuclear warheads in the world whose power of destruction is equal to one million, six hundred thousand times the yield of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. These warheads are already manufactured, they are connected and sealed to their projectiles, they are poised like runners before a marathon. They await only a madman's firing gun.

In seeking guidance, then, from classical Judaism, we are forced for the moment to abandon military and political categories. We must even go beyond the obvious categories of *pikkuah nefesh* (those laws called into play during life-threatening situations) and *bal tashhit* (those admonishing man not to be wasteful). Now, for the first time in human history, man has the capacity to prevent future generations from entering into life. "To kill one human being is murder . . . but what crime is it to cancel the numberless multitudes of unconceived people?"³ If we wish to find Judaism's

1. The most cogent summary of these traditions is found in the *Mishneh Torah* of Moses Maimonides, Judges, the Laws of Kings, Chapter 5 ff.

2. Jonathan Schell, "The Fate of the Earth," *New Yorker*, (Feb. 1): 75.

3. Jonathan Schell, "The Fate of the Earth," *New Yorker*, (Feb. 8): 59.

JOSEPH POLAK is director of B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation at Boston University.

response to an age that lives at the edge of nuclear extinction, an age in which, for the first time in history, humanity itself has taken on the quality of mortality, we need to sift other sources. Perhaps we would do well to begin with the classical understanding of man's relationship with the earth.

* * *

The tradition has at least three lessons to teach in the face of the nuclear armageddon. The first:

Rabbi Judah says: A man who goes abroad during the month of Nisan and sees the trees [beginning to] sprout, says: "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, [King of the Universe] in whose world nothing is missing, and [Who] creates within it goodly creatures and goodly trees, for the benefit of mankind."⁴

B. Berakhoth 43b⁵

The world was created for man. The same lesson is taught, somewhat more dramatically, in the name of Rabbi Joshua ben Qarḥa.

And every living substance was destroyed in the flood which was upon the face of the ground both man and cattle (Gen. 7:23). If man sinned, how did the beasts sin? . . . This may be compared to a man who set up a bridal canopy for his son, and prepared a banquet with every variety [of food]. Subsequently his son died, whereupon he arose and broke up the feast, saying, "Have I prepared all this for any but my son? Now that he is dead, what need have I of the banquet?" Then the Holy One, blessed-be-He, said, too, "Did I create the animals and beasts for aught but man: now that man has sinned, what need have I of the animals and beasts?"

B. Sanhedrin 108a

Again, this time in the words of Rabbi Saadya Gaon:

When we make an investigation [as to which of the many creatures] constitute the goal of creation . . . we find that the goal is man . . . In fact, at the very beginning of the Torah, God listed all classes of creatures. Then, when He contemplated them all, He said "Let us make man" (Gen. 1:26), like a person who builds a palace, and having finished and decorated it, brings its owner into it.⁶

4. A variant version of this blessing is found in Isaiah of Trani, *Pisqei Halakhah*, reprinted in standard editions of the Babylonian Talmud. Interpretations differing from mine are found in Haim David Joseph Azulai, *Birkei Joseph*, vol. I, sec. *Orakh Hayim*, ch. 226, para. 2. Cf. also Ovadiah Yosef, Resp. *Yehavei Da'ath* (Jerusalem, 1977), vol. I, no. 1.

5. Quotations from the Talmud and Midrashim which appear in these pages are based substantially on the Soncino translations. Biblical quotations are from the 1916 translation of the Jewish Publication Society.

6. Saadya Gaon, *The Book of Beliefs and Opinions* (New Haven, 1948), pp. 180-181 (emphasis mine). Maimonides, unlike Saadya, does not for a moment accept the notion that the earth was created for man (*Guide*, III, 13). This view is consonant with the aggadic tradition that the world was created not so much for man as for God's glory (B. *Shekalim* 5a, *Ktubot* 8a). Yet, whatever Maimonides' agenda here (cf. Julius Guttman, *Philosophies of Judaism* [New York, 1966], p. 196f), he is certainly not averse to the notion of man's responsibility to the earth (see, e.g., *Mishneh Torah*, The Book of Women, Laws of Marriages, ch. 15, para. 5), and this

Man expresses his ownership of the Divine gift of the earth by replenishing it, by assuring its continuity. No sooner are Adam and Eve formed, than God exhorts them to "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that creeps upon the earth."⁷ This is even more starkly expressed by Isaiah in an expression taken with particular seriousness by the Rabbis: ["God] created . . . [the earth] . . . not a waste;" explains the Prophet, "He formed it to be inhabited" (45:18).

While the language of ownership is one image that the tradition uses to help us understand our relationship to the Divine gift, another aspect of that relationship is already implicit in Rabbi Joshua ben Qarḥa's wedding canopy image: that of partnership.⁸ It is this model, of man as partner with God on earth, that proves particularly useful in connecting the wisdom of Jewish tradition to the nuclear nightmare.

President Truman is credited with the statement that with the discovery of the splitting of the atom "the basic power of the universe" has been revealed. Man has uncovered one of "the mysteries of Creation. He has discovered the force from which the sun draws its powers."⁹ But, he has discovered far more than that; for now, for the first time man can eliminate *Aharith Hayamin*; modern man has been given the power to cancel the Messiah.

Insofar as he has been given free will, man has always been capable of renegeing on his Divinely ordained mandate to replenish the earth. He has been, as an individual, free to bow out of the partnership. What has changed are the proportions of man's freedom of choice. Clusters of people have had the option to lay waste to civilizations, but never, never has man had the power utterly to destroy the earth and bring historical time to an end.

Does the Rabbinic model of Divine-human partnership still make sense? Has God dissolved the partnership and handed man's share in the earth wholly over to man? Such a notion is swiftly put to rest by classical Judaism's oft-recited prayer in which the worshipper thanks God "who created man with wisdom and who created in him multitudinous orifices and openings . . . such that if one were closed, (man) could not last even for a moment."¹⁰ As long as the cells are multiplying, the hearts beating, and the natural cycles working harmoniously, the believer can hardly

factor, in tandem with the Rabbinic maxim "these and those are each [however irreconcilable] the words of the living God," allows me to let this problem lie for the moment.

7. Gen. 1:26.

8. B. *Sabbath*, 10a; *Niddah* 31a. For a modern presentation of this idea see Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God In Search Of Man* (Philadelphia, 1962), p. 287.

9. Schell, *Op. cit.*, Feb. 1, p. 51.

10. Daily *Siddur*, morning prayers. See also *Be'er Hagolah* on *Code of Jewish Law*, *Orakh Hayim* 6:1.

accuse God of abandoning His commitments to the partnership. The remaining option, then, is that God has increased the human partner's share in the partnership. He has given man much greater power to opt out; in fact, man's ability to reject the Divine gift of the earth is, for the first time, absolute. God has increased man's freedom of choice to exponential, heretofore unimaginable proportions. Man has been given a far greater share in his destiny than ever before. As such, the discovery of the power of the atom signals a new epoch in human responsibility.

And yet —

Is it really given to man to cancel the Messiah? Is not the fundamental Jewish belief in the End of Days precisely that the Messiah is inevitable? The Talmud (*Sota* 11a) deals with the dilemma of the Biblical Egyptians threatened with extinction. Can God destroy this nation, it asks, in the light of His promise to Noah? "*He* will not bring [destruction] but they can bring [*it upon themselves*]," the Talmud replies. God's promise not to destroy the world remains intact.

And if we find this aggadic tradition less than consoling, the halakhah itself does not improve matters. Maimonides, in the last chapter of his *Mishneh Torah*,¹¹ argues that there will be little change in the natural order of things in the Messianic era. He goes to uncharacteristically great lengths to point out that life will continue normally, that "the world will follow its natural course." Rabad of Posquieres, in his classic *Hasagot*, disagrees with Maimonides and argues, quoting Scriptures, that, in fact, a new natural order will prevail. In Rabad's system, a nuclear apocalypse is possible; the messianic era, he claimed, was not for a world that you and I could identify. Maimonides, on the other hand, might counter to the contrary — that the inevitability of redemption in a naturally-ordered world implies that the extinction of man is not a possibility.

Which of the views are we meant to follow? Who, with confidence, could reconcile the two?

The Jew seeking guidance from the tradition is best off, perhaps, by seeking it elsewhere within the system. The Talmud (*Sota* 32a) in a teaching subsequently incorporated into the Codes (*Yoreh De'ah* 116) offers an alternative, perhaps more practical, approach:

Rabbi Yanai says, "A man should never put himself in a place of danger and say that a miracle will save him, lest there be no miracle, and if there be a miracle, his being thus saved will diminish his share in the world to come . . ."

The nuclear danger, halakhah seems to be telling us, is man's responsibility. Promises of redemption, in the face of imminent catastrophe, must give way to prudence. The first lesson from classical Judaism, that man be cognizant of his extraordinary new responsibilities, remains clear.

* * *

11. *Judges, Laws of Kings*, 12:3.

The second lesson has to do with man's increased social responsibility. Halakhah, protective of the unique identity and lifestyle of the Jew, has an extensive list of traditions discouraging him from engaging in many forms of social intercourse with the gentiles.¹² The most famous of these is the prohibition against intermarriage; others preclude the gentile's participation in Jewish liturgy, in the monarchy, and in rulings on Jewish Law. The full list is extensive, far longer than these few illustrations, but what is of interest is the degree of their applicability when the fate of the earth is at stake.

Halakhah recognizes that protection of the earth is an obligation upon all peoples, and not unique to the Jews. Our clue to the whereabouts of the sources on this matter comes from the Rabbinic uses of the verse in Isaiah that we have already quoted — that the earth was meant to be inhabited and not laid waste (45:18):

- A *Tosefta* attributed to Rabbi Nathan quotes the view of Beth Hillel that one needs to give birth to but a single child to fulfill one's obligation to "be fruitful and multiply." When Rava asks why Beth Hillel might have held such a view, he is answered with our verse "He created it not a waste; He founded it to be inhabited."¹³
- A *Mishna* in tractate *Eduyot* poses the problem of whom a person is permitted to marry if he is half bondsman and half free. The problem is, of course, that he cannot marry a free woman because he is half bondsman, nor can he marry a bondswoman since he is half free. Here Beth Hillel reverses an earlier ruling to conform to that of Beth Shammai: let him be set free, the *Mishna* asserts, "for was not the world created but for [fulfilling the commandment] . . . to be fruitful and multiply (Is it not) written 'He created it not a waste; He formed it to be inhabited.'"¹⁴
- The Talmud, in tractate *Bekhorot* asks whether a convert's son is entitled to his biblical rights of double-inheritance (Deut. 21:17,18), if he was born while his father was still a gentile. This is the same problem, the *Gemarah* points out, as when we need to determine whether a convert whose children were born while he was still a gentile, is considered, upon conversion, as having fulfilled his obligation to "be fruitful and multiply" or whether he needs to have children all over again. Rabbi Yohanan argues that he has already fulfilled his obligation — is it not written "He created it not a waste; He formed it to be inhabited?"¹⁵ The Tosafists clarify the matter even further: Gentiles are also meant to be fruitful and multiply; their level of obligation is, however, different from that compelling the Jew.¹⁶

What then, is this level of obligation? Clearly one that stems from what Isaiah was getting at: that being a person alive on this earth is sufficient imperative. Man's contract with the earth, regardless of whether he

12. See the exhaustive, if slanted, essay on the subject in *Encyclopedia Talmudit* (Jerusalem, 1953), vol. 5, pp. 286–366.

13. B. *Yebamoth* 62b.

14. *Eduyoth* 1:13.

15. B. *Behoroth*, 47a. Cf. however, Y.D. Ilan, *Sheeta Mequbezeth Al Maseheth Behoroth* (B'nei Brak, 1975), ad loc. for a variant reading.

16. Ilan, *Op. cit.*, ad loc., s.v. *deBiheyotho*.

was part of the community at Sinai, itself mandates his responsibility not to let the earth be "laid waste".

What all this seems to be suggesting is, quite simply, that for the believing Jew to be reticent about becoming involved in secular issues of Gentile culture is Halakhically inappropriate when it comes to questions of planetary survival. This is so not merely because of the danger posed by the bombs, but also because of our natural partnership in the earth with all people, regardless of their race or origin. This second lesson from the tradition, then, is that the Jew must participate with others at whatever levels necessary — ideological, political, and scientific, to ensure the continuity of the planet.

King Solomon made himself a palanquin (*appyrion*) (S.S. 3:9). "Palanquin" signifies the world. Why was it called a "palanquin?" Because he created it, that men may be fruitful (*periyah*) and multiply in it. This accords with the fact: "He created it not a waste, He formed it to be inhabited."¹⁷

The second lesson is that with respect to planetary survival, the walls of the ghetto have crumbled; Jew and Gentile must work hand in hand to protect the great gift of the earth.

* * *

The third lesson comes from the Holocaust.

Those who write about nuclear destruction, planetary extinction and its consequences can find a ready-made vocabulary: "Holocaust," "the undoable," "the unthinkable," are the phrases with which the second half of the 20th Century is all too familiar. The remaining lessons from Judaism for dealing with the nuclear peril, then, come from its experience with the Nazi Holocaust. They are, I believe, four in number:

1. *The undoable is doable.* Auschwitz did, in fact, occur. Stated differently, this teaching says that the knowledge of the good does not necessarily lead to the doing of good. The proceedings of the Nuremberg trials illustrate all too graphically that many Nazi criminals were well educated, wordly and intelligent and committed atrocities in full awareness that they were performing crimes against humanity.¹⁸
2. *The unbelievable must be believed.* When the world, during World War II, did not believe Auschwitz was possible, Auschwitz took place, in part, for this very reason. That nations could try to blow each other up is unthinkable — it is not rational, it makes no sense. The message of Auschwitz is that what makes no sense, what is morally noxious to most of humanity, can quite easily take place.¹⁹ The courage to believe the unbelievable and to think the unthinkable must come from the experience of the Jew in the death camps.
3. *There is no knowledge that is exempt from moral scrutiny.* There is no thinker who is so objective that he is exempt from moral accountability. Even as,

17. Numbers *Rabba*, 12:4.

18. See, in this regard, Kenneth R. Seeskin, "The Reality of Radical Evil," JUDAISM 29, no. 4 (Fall, 1980): 440-453.

19. Cf. Schell, *Op. cit.*, Feb. 1, p. 48, and throughout.

during the Nazi Holocaust, it was immoral to make available man's technological expertise for the efficient workings of the death camps, so is it immoral to use the knowledge of the power of the atom for the construction of megabombs which can end history.

4. *Man is not privy to God's agenda.* While the question, "where was God during the Holocaust?" has been replaced, of late, by "where was man?," it is clear that, with the end of prophecy, the nature (though not necessarily the reality) of God's role in history ultimately remains a mystery. We must also, therefore, learn to live with the reality that whether or not God will save man from himself is not ours to know. The Code of Jewish Law in the laws of *Shmirath haNefesh*, already quoted, cautions us not to rely on miracles. It does not seem to suggest that not relying on miracles is tantamount to lack of faith.

* * *

Yet we cannot end here for there is yet another way to look at all of this. Our generation, as has been said, has been chosen as worthy of what is, perhaps, the greatest scientific discovery of all. We have come upon mysteries of the universe inherent in the power of the atom, which our forefathers, from the alchemists on, sought, but to which they were not privy. At the same time, the power of the survival of humanity has, in much larger measure, been placed in our hands.

Is it possible to perceive the discovery of atomic power as an extraordinary gift? Is it possible to understand the increased capacity for self-annihilation that is correlative to this gift as a statement of Divine trust? Are we, perhaps, being told that these mysteries lay in waiting for the generation that was equal to the challenges they presented, and that the generation so chosen was that of the children of Auschwitz precisely because it is only to the children of Auschwitz that man's ultimate capacity for evil was first fully revealed? Can it be that the ultimate fulfillment of the commandment to be fruitful and multiply and not lay waste was reserved for our generation? For unless we believe this, the last words of Moses make little sense:

For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not too hard for thee, neither is it far off . . . See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil, in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His ordinances; then thou shalt live and multiply, and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest in to possess it . . . I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before thee life and death, the blessing and the curse; therefore choose life . . .²⁰

20. Deuteronomy 30:11-20.

God After the Holocaust: An Attempted Reconciliation

JOHN FISCHER

The Problem

All the wisdom of all the philosophers, said Dostoyevsky, cannot explain the death of one innocent child. How, therefore, dare one attempt to explain the deaths of one million one hundred thousand children? Any statement would be an understatement. Yet the holocaust embraces a basic paradox. It imposes silence but demands speech. It defies solutions but requires responses.¹

The Holocaust in its immenseness and horror raises many questions. But, foremost, it casts doubt on our understanding of God as the all-powerful sovereign of history who is at the same time loving and good. Can we hold on to a God who is loving, powerful, present in history and committed to His people Israel in the face of the overwhelming events of our generation? How can a loving, powerful God have allowed the Holocaust? And even if suitable explanations are found, we must realize that there is a time when explanations fail. To those who have lost family and friends, the primary concern is not explanation but compassion.²

A Survey of Responses

Faith cannot pass by such horror in silence. Faith because it is trust in God, demands justice of God. It cannot countenance that God be involved in injustice and cruelty . . . The man of faith questions God because of his faith.³

Even the most observant of men have no excuse for not coming to grips with the problem of the Holocaust; it would contradict their piety. Job provides the outstanding example of this. He challenges God and resists his friends' arguments because their arguments degrade God in their defense of an unjust position. God commends him for his stand (Job 42:7).

In the Bible there are two distinct levels of response to the problem of

1. Byron Sherwin, "The Impotence of Explanation and the European Holocaust," *Tradition* (Winter-Spring 1972): 99.

2. Eugene Borowitz, *How Can A Jew Speak Of Faith Today?* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), p. 33.

3. Eliezer Berkovits, *Faith After The Holocaust* (New York: KTAV, 1973), p. 68.

JOHN FISCHER is a doctoral candidate in education at the University of South Florida.

evil and apparent injustice: faith and protest. However, neither one technically provides a solution to the problem. Faith accepts the situation without raising the question, while protest is a response that allows man to deal with the problem emotionally, i.e., by “letting off steam” and pouring out his feelings, but does not provide a solution. At best, it states the problem and registers a complaint.⁴

Historically, several solutions have been proposed. The classical one, *mi-p’nei hata’einu* (“for our sins we were punished”), runs into difficulty in a number of situations: when punishment outweighs sin; when the wicked prosper; when the good suffer.⁵ There has, therefore, been refinement: 1) Suffering may be collective responsibility, i.e., it may be due to the sins of ancestors or other members of the community, thus balancing the accounts. 2) Delayed punishment may be involved, i.e., “they will get theirs sometime” (cf. *Psa.* 73:18). 3) There will be judgment in the after-life when justice will be done.⁶ But even though there is truth in this “solution,” it still leaves unanswered questions. What about the Jewish people who were persecuted precisely because they, or their parents, kept the faith? It was the Eastern European Jews, those who were most observant and devout, who were most thoroughly devastated by the Holocaust, not their less observant counterparts. And, besides, what sin could justify such punishment as the Holocaust? And if the extermination of six million people is God’s punishment, with what kind of God are we left?

While there is suffering for sins, not all suffering is for sin. The biblical and Talmudic data indicate that trouble can be part of God’s love as part of our testing or refining; like Job’s, it can be educative, not punitive.⁷ But even this notion falls far short when applied to the extermination machinery of Hitler.

To see any purpose in the death camps, the traditional believer is forced to regard the most demonic, antihuman explosion in all history as a meaningful expression of God’s purposes.⁸

Another usual traditional solution to the problem has been simply to confess that God’s ways are beyond human comprehension; we are dealing with a mystery. While there is truth in this proposition, it leaves one unsatisfied and somewhat suspicious of having been the victim of a “cop-out” or easy answer.

Maybaum has posited an ingenious model, in which Israel is unique and history testifies thereto. Israel’s history testifies to God and his purpose. Yet this history is not isolated from that of other nations; it is enacted

4. Sherwin, p. 103.

5. Byron Sherwin, “Theodicy: Reason and Mystery,” *Central Conference of American Rabbis Journal* (June 1971): p. 66.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 68, 71.

7. Cf. *Prov.* 3:12; *B.T. Ber.* 5a.

8. Richard Rubinstein, *After Auschwitz: Radical Theological and Contemporary Judaism* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1966), p. 153.

through interaction with other people. This will occasionally involve *hurban*, destructive events which end old eras and bring in new ones. But by bringing in new ones, advance or progress is made, so devastation has value. The destruction of the two Temples as well as the Holocaust were *hurban*. The latter was an advance in that, once and for all, it ended the feudal systems, society, and thinking of the Middle Ages.⁹ However, even if this assessment of the termination of the Middle Ages were to be accepted, one is left with the question, "Was progress worth this kind of destruction?" and with a strong distaste for "progress" of this kind.

Still another response has been that God is in some way guilty of sin and in need of atonement. A story about Levi Isaac of Berditchev illustrates this concept. A tailor came to him and explained the "deal" that he had made with God on Yom Kippur.

"But You, Lord, You have committed many grievous sins. You let babies die. You permit wars to rage on and people to suffer and die. So let us make a deal. If you forgive me, I'll forgive You."

On hearing this story, Levi Isaac flew into a rage.

"How could you let God off so easily? You had Him in the palm of your hand. You asked only for your absolution when you could have forced Him to redeem the world."¹⁰

Admittedly, there are biblical instances of Job, Moses and Abraham arguing with God or complaining about injustice. But in these situations there is some resolution precisely because God does act equitably and is just, and so one can argue for God to be consistent with His nature and to remember His promises and love. But if God stands condemned for injustice, then where do we find an absolute standard for justice and right? We are left with the same dilemma as those who posit that "God is dead."

Among Jewish scholars, Richard Rubinstein has suggested that the Holocaust shows that "God is dead." Perhaps one of the most scathing criticisms of Rubinstein was delivered by Elie Wiesel.

How strange that the philosophy denying God came not from the survivors. Those who came out with the so-called God is dead theology, not one of them had been in Auschwitz. Those who had, never said it. I have my problems with God, believe me. I have my anger and I have my quarrels and I have my nightmares. But my dispute, my bewilderment, my astonishment is with men. I did not understand how men could be so "barbarian."¹¹

When faced with the alternatives of denying the senselessness of the events or denying God, Rubinstein opts for the latter. But to relinquish the God of history in this way and to set aside history as the sphere of

9. Ignatz Maybaum, *The Face of God After Auschwitz* (Amsterdam: Polnk and Van Gennep Ltd., 1965), p. 32; also Steven Katz, "Jewish Faith After the Holocaust; Four Approaches," *Encyclopedia Judaica Yearbook*, 1975/6 (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1976), pp. 98-9.

10. Sherwin, "Impotence," p. 104.

11. Quoted in Hans Tiesel, "Holocaust Interpretations and Religious Assumptions," *JUDAISM* (Spring, 1976): 146.

God's operation flies in the face of Jewish tradition and the biblical perspective. It leads to hopelessness and pessimism about man's future. It leaves the world in the hands of man, who produced and allowed the Holocaust. Further, as Borowitz has pointed out, to opt for no God means that everything is allowed, and we have no right to be disgusted and outraged by events. What took place in the death camps was then merely a reflection of reality and not a violation of some standard of right.¹² If carried to its logical conclusion, Rubinstein's position ultimately justifies Nazism. If there is no God to be concerned about justice, then only man is left to determine the standards of morality. And, each and every man can make that determination for himself, including Adolph Hitler. As man-created truth, Hitler's system is "morally" valid.¹³

If God is dead, then Auschwitz was not despicable and Treblinka was permitted. If there is no transcendent standard of holiness by which all men are bound, then why should the strong not rule and torture and destroy.¹⁴

Martin Buber has proposed another solution, the "hiding face of God." In other words, God is eclipsed or hidden, obscured by the extent and intensity of suffering and evil in the world.¹⁵ This is, at best, an ambiguous kind of solution. It may be a confession that one does not understand God but retains a belief within. Though this is not wrong, it presents some problems. The appeal to the hiding God may obscure the problem of trying to have it "both ways," i.e., God as acting in history and yet denying it for certain events; He is absent in these events, but He is still in charge.¹⁶ One could well adapt the scene from 1 Kings 18:26-29 to suit this situation.

One might claim of the Holocaust victims that "they cried aloud" but "no one answered, no one heeded." For God was hidden from them. And the cynic might say of God that "either He is musing, or He has gone aside, or He is on a journey, or perhaps He is asleep and must be awakened." . . . God's hiddenness or absence in this setting counts against Him, or at least it did for Elijah and for everyone on Mt. Carmel.¹⁷

Emil Fackenheim, on the other hand, sees God's presence at Auschwitz; God addresses his people from Auschwitz with the "commanding voice."

Jews are forbidden to hand Hitler posthumous victories. They are commanded to survive as Jews, lest the Jewish people perish. They are commanded to remember the victims of Auschwitz lest their memory perish. They are forbidden to despair of man and his world and to escape into either cynicism or other worldliness, lest they cooperate in delivering the

12. Borowitz, p. 53.

13. Berkovits, pp. 71-2.

14. Borowitz, pp. 33-4.

15. Martin Buber, *The Prophetic Faith* (New York: Harper and Row, 1949), p. 191; cf. Tiefel, p. 137.

16. Tiefel, p. 138.

17. Ibid.

world over to the forces of Auschwitz. Finally, they are forbidden to despair of the God of Israel, lest Judaism perish.¹⁸

These sentiments are very laudable; we should not give up faith because we cannot thoroughly deal with the problem of evil. But there are some unanswered questions here, too. How is this a new command from God? Isn't survival included among the other 613? Is spite or defiance of the forces of Auschwitz sufficient reason to keep the faith? Is this simply stubbornness that holds on to tradition merely because not doing so would mean a complete victory for evil? Isn't that giving Hitler and the forces of evil more credit than they are due? It almost sounds like a man convincing himself not to leave his wife who has been raped, because leaving her would please the rapist.¹⁹

Since none of these attempts at solution appear sufficient and satisfying, are we then left with only questions and no answers? Not necessarily.

Challenging Some Assumptions

The numerous accounts of Jewish people being faithful to the traditions and praising God up to their own deaths should make us less sure about the non-existence of a solution that can be personally satisfying. Nor should we be too quick to criticize these people who died for inconsistency, for not thinking through the implications of their own suffering, or for going to their death for no reason at all. Their personal solutions were put to the ultimate acid test, the sacrifice of their lives. The piety that they showed, and even their joy in many cases, is part of the data to be weighed. If Hitler's machinations speak for the absence of God, what about the piety, moral grandeur, faith and saintliness of the victims? These, too, must be considered.²⁰

Here arises the question of what "facts" or data an individual might use in constructing a model for "understanding" the Holocaust. Frequently, presuppositions or methodology will affect "facts." Different assumptions and different starting points will result in different conclusions. Former solutions may have been totally acceptable, given their assumptions. Our assumptions may be different and may cast doubt on those of the past, but they may be no more valid.

To go one step further, there may well be a logical fallacy implicit in any attempt to explain evil. By attempting to justify the God of the universe, we may be guilty of putting Him on the same level as the world, in making Him merely an object of human understanding. This could

18. "Jewish Faith and the Holocaust," *Commentary* (Aug. 1968), quoted in Patrice Fischer, "A Quest for Jewish Survival in America Since 1967," unpublished master's thesis.

19. Tiefel, p. 139.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 140.

well be totally inappropriate at best. Biblical man realized that not everything could be explained and was able to accept this.²¹

This realization could also make us aware of a “missing” perspective. God could very well have “revealed” Himself in the events of the Holocaust, but He may have done so in a way that did not match our expectations. As a result, we may not have “seen” Him.²² God can be present without acting or by acting in ways outside our definitions. We may not be aware of His presence because of an inadequate frame of reference. A certain perspective may be necessary for one to hear God’s voice or see His presence; perhaps it cannot be shown decisively to those who will not see it. Skepticism is healthy, but at important times it can get in the way of one’s vision.²³

A number of other assumptions also deserve questioning. Many people operate with the notion that faithfulness to God must yield human good, that faith must pay off for us. That notion may be nice but it is not necessarily valid.

A truer response would be to relinquish the self-understanding of faith that binds God to man’s good fortune. The covenant faith is for better or worse. It is unconditional from God’s side and should be unqualified from our side as well. And if that is a true understanding of faith, of the genuine biblical meaning of commitment to God, then the rejections of faith that arise from an awareness of Holocaust suffering are profound non-sequiturs.²⁴

Another assumption often left unchallenged is that God’s presence in history assures that the worst will not happen. “God would not permit nuclear catastrophe, wholesale genocide, extinction of the earth through shortages of resources or through pollution.” This assumes no human responsibility, that God will “miraculously” neutralize human destructiveness, taking things out of man’s hands. But, God does not act in history in such a way as to take responsibility out of man’s hands. God expects people to respond in love and compassion to those who are suffering. When they do, God is honored. When they refuse, His “grace” is denied and obscured. This understanding forces one to re-evaluate to whom evil and suffering are to be ascribed. Just because God grants man the ability to do the right thing, one cannot blame God for the injustice and moral failures due to man’s non-use of this ability.

This assumption also reveals a basic inconsistency between what we credit to God and what we reserve for ourselves. Generally, man assumes responsibility for his own acts and does not blame God for his own shortcomings. And yet, he attributes major events such as wars and their sufferings, persecution, and oppression to God’s actions. This is inconsistent.

21. Cf. Isa. 55:8-9.

22. Tiefel, p. 138.

23. Emil Fackenheim’s perspective as analyzed by Steven Katz, “Jewish Faith After The Holocaust: Four Approaches,” p. 97.

24. Tiefel, p. 142.

ent and removes responsibility for these actions from man, where the responsibility should lie. It would be more appropriate and consistent, when these events are the result of human malice and evil, to assign responsibility to man's failures, inadequacies and wickedness. If personal moral shortcomings are our own fault, moral failures on the part of nations — which are, after all, made up of individuals — are also the result of their own actions and are their responsibility, not God's.

This emphasis on human responsibility might lead some to assume that providence and responsible human acts are mutually exclusive. That is not necessarily the case, e.g., the first Passover and consequent Exodus could not have happened if the people had not acted responsibly by following God's instructions at the time.

In view of the previous considerations, a word about the ultimate question that the Holocaust raises is in order.

The question raised by the Holocaust that concerns man most directly is not, "Where was God?," but "where was man?"²⁵

Steps to a Possible Solution

The Psalmist's perspective was that evil is a perversion of the created purpose, not a part of the original creation. It was not the result of divine activity; it resulted from man's misuse of his freedom to choose between good and evil. In choosing evil man turns his back on God. The reality of evil should be ascribed, therefore, to the human misuse of freedom, not to God. Where there is choice, there is always the possibility of wrong choice, and so, "Evil is the logical and ontological result of human transgression of the moral order."²⁶

This idea of human freedom is nothing new to Judaism. God allows man the freedom of choice to the extent that He does not even interfere when man chooses evil and suffering. It is true that if He did, it would thwart the effecting of evil, but then, the possibility of good would be excluded as well. Were it not for the fact that God respects man's freedom to decide his own course in personal responsibility, then not only would moral good and evil be eliminated from the earth, man as man would be also. Freedom and responsibility are part of the very nature of man. Remove these from man, and he is no longer truly human; he becomes a robot or computer. If man is to be truly human, he must be allowed to make his choices freely. If he has this freedom, he will use it, often wrongly. He will make wrong choices, and the result will often mean suffering for the innocent. Humanness requires freedom, which is then open to abuse.

We like to see God as loving and merciful, waiting for the wicked to find their way to Him. But while God is patient with wicked humanity,

25. Berkovits, p. 36.

26. Sherwin, "Theodicy," p. 66.

they continue their dark business and the innocent suffer; while He shows his forbearance with the wicked, he seemingly turns a deaf ear to the anguish of the oppressed. It is a paradox: humanness is impossible if God is only just; if God is loving, over and above the requirements of strict justice, there must be human suffering and evil.

One could accurately say, then, "God operates within the tension of carrying out His divine purposes and respecting man's freedom of choice."²⁷ This would mean that God gave to men and nations the opportunity to fulfill their responsibility, to assert themselves and act justly on their own, but, in some way, guided or guaranteed political circumstances so that they chose to get involved and ultimately defeated Hitler, even though their initial responses were to allow Hitler to have his way with the Jews. In a way, God's "mightiness" is demonstrated by His patience with the wicked. For God to demonstrate His power in the world would not be a great accomplishment, but curbing, controlling the use of His infinite power is a manifestation of real strength.²⁸ And while doing so, to preserve man from destroying himself and still accomplish his own purposes in the world, especially as it relates to the survival of the Jewish people, this is His awesomeness, as the Talmud also refers to it.

That indeed is His mightiness that he subdues His inclination and grants long-suffering to the wicked. And this in itself is a proof of His awesomeness; for were it not for fear of Him, how could one people survive among the nations (*Yoma* 69a).

The idea of God allowing man the freedom to make his own decisions can be compared to a parent-child relationship.

As the parent who watches his child misuse his freedom, learn the hard and sometimes tragic way, God must painfully view the sight of His falling, stumbling, bleeding child and, like a parent, He must share in the affliction of His children; He must feel the grief they feel.²⁹

Thus, reversing the perspective and looking at the situation through God's eyes produces a different dimension. Then, the Bible and subsequent history become the story of God's hope and man's failures, and of God's continued disappointment with man. God must then view the world with great sorrow and pain as His children fail to their own hurt and undoing.³⁰ So, we might say that, as a parent does, God identifies with His children who suffer. Their suffering is *His* suffering; their mourning is *His* mourning; their pain is *His* pain. He weeps for them, with them, over them. This suffering and identification is not because of what man does to Him but because of what man does to himself and to others, much like a

27. B.W. Woods, *Understanding Suffering* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1974), p. 26, quoted in Brenda Smathers, "Jewish Arguments Against the Existence of God Following the Holocaust," unpublished paper, 1976.

28. Berkovits, pp. 108-9.

29. Sherwin, "Impotence," p. 105.

30. *Ibid.*

child who misuses his freedom while learning the lessons of growing up. God suffers the agony of the innocent and oppressed. He turns His anger from the wicked and is patient with them, and He suffers with the victims who endure the consequences of His mercy to the rebellious.

This idea of God suffering with His people is also found in the rabbinic literature. For example, God is seen in anguish at the destruction of the Temple.

Is not My Temple destroyed and My children thrown into chains? I am in anguish, as it is written: "I am with him in anguish."³¹

One might even say, as Tiefel does,³² that God even dies with His people, not in the sense of the "final death" of God, but in His identification with them. The child-hanging scene from Wiesel's *Night* illustrates this in a way. Wiesel says of God, "Where is He? Here He is — He is hanging here on this gallows."³³ This identity and sharing with His people, with their suffering, is an expression of God's goodness and love.

Jewish history and existence points to God's presence in another way. As Fackenheim³⁴ has argued, the Jewish people were brought into being by powerful, overwhelming events which were of such formative character that they continue to influence all future events and claim the allegiance of the people. The outstanding examples are obviously the Exodus and the giving of the Torah, both of which demonstrate God's presence in the world and assure us of the fact that God is the one who continues to watch over His people.

One dare not struggle with the problem of faith as if the holocaust were all we knew about the Jew and his relations to God . . . Auschwitz does not contain the entire history of Israel; it is not the all-comprehensive Jewish experience . . . Notwithstanding Auschwitz, the life of the patriarchs is still with him; the Exodus did not turn into a mirage; Sinai has not come tumbling down; the prophets have not become charlatans; the return from Babylon has not proved to be a fairy tale. . . . No, the holocaust is not all of Jewish history, nor its final chapter. That it did not become the Final Solution as was planned by the powers of darkness enables the Jew who has known of the divine presence to discern intimations of familiar divine concern in the very midst of abandonment.³⁵

Jewish survival after Auschwitz demonstrates that Auschwitz is not absolute. And, it gives hope that the unanswered questions will be answered in future acts of God's redemption.³⁶ Maybaum makes an interesting point in working from Isaiah and the term "a remnant shall return." Although one third of the Jewish people were destroyed, two

31. Midrash on Ps. 20:1.

32. Tiefel, pp. 146-7.

33. Elie Wiesel, *Night* (New York: Avon Books, 1969), p. 76.

34. Emil Fackenheim, *God's Presence In History* (New York: New York University Press, 1970), pp. 8-11.

35. Berkovits, pp. 134-136.

36. Ibid.

thirds survived. He views this salvation as being as great a miracle as the Red Sea, given the intentions of the authors of the Final Solution. It is redemption. As such, the salvation of the majority needs to be considered as much as the death of the minority.³⁷ The point is well-taken.

The Jewish people's continued existence and preservation, and with it the rebirth of the State of Israel, can be explained only in terms of God. This is an indicator of His presence in history.

Seen in the light of the generally observed facts and processes of history, the very idea of a people of God, of constituting a people on the basis of a commitment to do the will of God and to the belief that life and death are determined by the ethical categories of good and evil, was a fantastic proposition. All history advised against it. . . . However, this fantastic concept became itself a fact of history. The people of God did come into being; it entered history, it became itself a historical reality, exercising great historical influence and demonstrating mysterious survival power. It has all been quite irregular. It is all in conflict with the rest of historical experience, yet itself is a fact of history.³⁸

When viewed in the light of repeated attempts, such as those of Pharaoh, Haman, Antiochus, and others throughout Jewish history, this analysis becomes more pointed. Despite curbing His power in history, God does guide. That is the reason for the continued survival of the Jewish people and the existence of the modern state. Jews have survived as a powerless, persecuted people; God has protected them without always "visibly" exercising His great power.³⁹ Jewish existence bears eloquent testimony to the God of history and to His presence. Moreover, Israel as a modern day miracle cannot be excluded from the Holocaust discussion. It stands as the outstanding example of Jewish survival in history and thus testifies loudly to God's "miraculous" guidance in history. It helps us understand God's role in a history that includes the Holocaust, and it gives us hope for the future.

And yet, in all honesty, one must admit that all of the questions may not be completely answered to everyone's satisfaction. Perhaps it is at this point that the appeal to mystery is appropriate, *after* the hard questions have been asked, and *after* the thinking and explanations have been attempted to the best of everyone's ability. After all, there does come a time and place where we, as men, have to admit that, being finite, we cannot completely understand the infinite God. Perhaps a parable will illustrate the problem that we face. In one of the other galaxies in space there exists a two-dimensional world, Planus, inhabited by a population of geometric squares. One day a cube introduces itself to the inhabitants. In describing itself, it speaks of having depth as well as length and width, consisting of six "squares" yet being one object, a cube. The squares are not able

37. Maybaum, p. 59.

38. Berkovits, p. 110.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 109.

to comprehend much of what the cube is saying because they lack the essential third dimension which makes understanding of a cube possible. As finite men we face the same kind of problem in understanding the infinite God.⁴⁰ The appeal to mystery, when used in this way, is no longer a “cop-out” for the hard work of attempting to wrestle with difficult issues; it explains why we may not be able to reach a complete understanding of matters pertaining to God. We may only be able to suggest probable mechanisms or models, which we *must* do to the best of our abilities.

Answering Some Possible Objections

The discussion relative to Israel may provoke the question, “Does the State of Israel assure Jewish survival?” Or, for that matter, are we assured of the survival of the State of Israel? First, we are not saying that the State of Israel assures Jewish survival. The point is that the existence of modern day Israel, or, more properly stated, the fact that a modern state did emerge after 1900 years is an excellent example of the survival of the Jewish people through the centuries and of the presence of God in history. Its possible demise would not alter the “miracle” of its re-emergence in our generation. And, for those who still place credence in the words of the prophets, there appears to be a promise that this state will survive.⁴¹

A second objection relates to ultimate responsibility for man's choices. After all, is it not true that if God allowed man freedom in the first place, then He must be ultimately responsible for the freedom which is misused? God creates the evil whether it is explicit or implicit in man's choice. How can God be moral and the source of morality if, in this case, He is not morally responsible? In a business, for example, if a representative acts, the manager is responsible for those actions. Restructured, the dilemma can be described in this way:

1. God is responsible for making everything in the world, including human freedom.
2. Human freedom is what brought about moral evil in the world.
3. Hence, God is responsible for what brought about moral evil in the world.⁴²

However, there is a solution to this problem.

First, the conclusion is not this: (a) God is responsible for all the evil in the world; rather it is this: (b) God is responsible for creating the freedom through which evil came into the world. That is, God is responsible for creating that which made evil possible (viz., free creatures), but He is not responsible for what they actually do with their freedom any more than automobile manufacturers are responsible for all the accidents resulting from reckless driving.⁴³

40. Adapted from C.S. Lewis, *Beyond Personality*.

41. Isa. 11:11-12; cf. Amos 9:14-15.

42. Norman Geisler, *Philosophy of Religion* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974), p. 328.

If we argue for anything less, we validate the argument used at the Nuremberg Trials, "I'm not responsible; I was just following orders." If man is not morally responsible for all of his own actions, justice and law can be placed on the shelf and some future Nazi party can rule. It was a Nazi underling who first introduced the argument about the manager being responsible for the representative's actions, thus relieving himself of responsibility for his own deeds. There is a further problem with the business analogy. Who ever made the claim that man acts as God's agent or representative, under His orders?

One more question remains: if God did intervene at the Exodus, why did He not do so at Auschwitz? There are several possible responses to this. First, the Exodus and Sinai were constituting events, they produced the nation. As constituting events, they are unique. Second, God is patient with man, allowing the freedom and responsibility which make him human. If God were to intervene to thwart every evil, man would not be free and human, and we would be living in a topsy-turvy world of suspended "laws of nature." But, finally, God's guiding protection — within the terms of His controlling His awesome power in the "mightiness" of His restraint — did stop Hitler and bring him down, saving two thirds of the Jewish people from the Final Solution, and did ensure the miraculous re-emergence of Israel. In short, God was moving in history within the limits that He set for Himself in making man truly human. Beyond this we can go no further in explanation; we have reached the border of "mystery." And so, in one sense,

We still await God's explanation of why even one innocent child had to perish in Auschwitz. What is often forgotten, however, is that God may be asking man the identical question and awaiting his response.⁴⁴

43. *Ibid.*, p. 329.

44. Sherwin, "Impotence," p. 106.

Maimonides and our Love for God

SHUBERT SPERO

THE TORAH CALLS UPON MAN TO BRING himself to two loves: for his fellow man and for God. In both cases the Torah breaks new moral and religious ground by calling for a love of unusual quality and surprising intensity. In the case of man, "And you shall love your fellow man as yourself." In the case of God, "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."¹

Clearly, both of these injunctions would appear to constitute fundamental principles of Judaism inasmuch as they prescribe one of the most profound and powerful of the positive emotions as the underlying component of the entire relationship to man and to God. For, "love is strong as death; many waters cannot extinguish love; a very flame of the Lord."²

The difficulty, of course, is how the Torah can presume to legislate love, to command emotions as if love were something over which the individual exercises control and can turn on or off at will.³ Also, how can one learn to love someone like God who cannot be seen?

In regard to the command to love man, most commentators do not interpret the passage as referring to the actual emotion. They point out that there is a difference in the grammatical form so that *veahavtah le raia-kha* . . . can be translated as, "You shall be loving towards your fellow-man" with the focus on deeds and behavior rather than on feelings.⁴ Secondly, on moral grounds it is questionable whether all of our fellow-men are worthy of such an intense personal emotional attachment. But even in the absence of these considerations, could the Torah realistically believe that it could get us to love our fellow-men as we love ourselves!

However, when we turn to the command to love God, it seems that we have no alternative but to interpret the imperative as referring in its basic meaning to the actual human emotion of love. First, because neither the grammatical nor the moral considerations which apply to the love of man hold here. But more important, the teaching to love God appears repeat-

1. Levit. 19:18; Deut. 6:5.

2. Song of Songs 8:6-7.

3. See Ibn Ezra on Ex. 20:14.

4. See Commentaries of Nachmanides and Malbim on Levit. 19:18.

SHUBERT SPERO is now occupying the Irving I. Stone chair of Jewish thought at Bar-Ilan University in Israel.

edly in the Torah together with the commands to “fear God” and, particularly, to “cleave unto Him” (*de’vaikut*), which together form the highest reaches of religious experience.⁵ While each of these commands undoubtedly generates many particular behavioral consequences, they are all, in the first and primary instance, felt inner experiences of a complex affective and conative nature. When we speak of love of God we are talking about one of the ways through which man can commune with God and draw closer to Him. In the words of J. Albo, “For love is the union and complete mental identification of lover and the loved.”⁶

It is for these reasons, then, that when we speak of the obligation to love God, we must understand “love” to be the elemental human emotion which we are familiar with from our own experience, although, to be sure, when it is applied to God, it is of the highest and purest form. Here is Maimonides’ description of love for God given apparently in human terms:

What is the right kind of love? One is to entertain towards the Lord an exceedingly great and mighty love so that his very soul shall be bound by the love of God; being ever enraptured by it, as is the mind of one who being lovesick does not cease to languish after his beloved on whom he ever dotes whether sitting or rising, eating or drinking; nay, greater than this should be the love for the Lord in the hearts of His lovers who are ever to be enraptured with this love as He commanded us. That is what Solomon said by way of allegory: “For I am lovesick.” The whole book of Canticles is an allegory of man’s love for God.⁷

If so, then we remain with the original difficulty of how is it possible for the Torah to command us to love God?

Maimonides seems to suggest that while “love” is, indeed, the ultimate goal of the commandment, man is called upon to perform certain acts which are under his control and which are causally related to the love for God. Once these acts are performed, the love of God is sure to follow:

And what is the way that will lead to the love of Him and the fear of Him? When a person contemplates His great and wondrous works and creatures and from them perceives His wisdom which is incomparable and infinite, he will straightaway love Him, praise Him, glorify Him and long with an exceeding longing to know His great Name; even as David said, “My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God.” And when he ponders these same matters he will recoil, frightened, and realize that he is a small creature . . .⁸

In the process outlined by Maimonides, the following steps can be distinguished:

- 1) Contemplation of God’s works and creatures, i.e., the natural world.
- 2) Realization of the wisdom of the Maker of the natural world, i.e., God.

5. Deut. 13:4,5 and 11:22.

6. *Sefer Ha-Ikarim*, Book III, Chapter 36.

7. *Hilkhot Teshuvah*, 10:3.

8. *Hilkhot Yesodai Hatorah*, 2:1-2.

3) Experience of a love for God (which follows immediately and necessarily from #2).

4) Development of a desire and a passion to know about God, to come closer to Him. (The more knowledge that man has, the greater his love.)

The immediate difficulty that we have with this account lies in the connection between steps #2 and #3. Even though we may accept the claim that man, by examining the macro- and micro-phenomena of nature — by peering into the intricacies of the genetic code, by grasping the wondrous ways in which the planet earth is a self-correcting ecosystem, by understanding the life-history of the galaxies from “big-bang” to “black-holes” — might see all of this as the work of God and come to appreciate His greatness, he might still, in his appreciation, be limited to an understanding of God’s wisdom. Certainly, “He who spoke and the world came into existence,” must surely be a most intelligent, most knowledgeable and most wise Being in addition to possessing unimaginable power. But does this necessarily lead to love? Does the recognition of wisdom in someone imply that I will love that person?

But, perhaps, Maimonides means something else: When I recognize the great wisdom with which the world was put together and realize that all of that wisdom is aimed at providing man with a rich, beautiful and challenging life in a cooperative environment, then I am filled with a great rush of love. But, in this case, what I experience is primarily a feeling of gratitude for services rendered. While thankfulness is a proper moral response, its source is egoism (I am happy over what you did for *me*) and is far from the ideal of *amor Dei* which should be altruistic and disinterested. Indeed, in a traditional commentary on the Code, we are told that what Maimonides seems to be referring to is precisely the kind of feeling that is developed for someone or something not because one may personally benefit or have some practical use from it. The language is significant:

The love that attaches to all things beloved can come about in one of two ways. The first results from the good, the pleasure, or the kindness which the lover experiences as a result of the beloved. Such is the nature of the love of man for woman or of a servant to his King. The second type of love comes about when a person notices a beautiful thing and approves of it. Then he will love and desire it and when he attains it he will experience joy. As when a person sees a precious stone or a beautiful and stately house, immediately his soul will desire to reach it and cleave to it.⁹

This is, of course, the Rabbinic distinction between *ahavah sheteluyah bedavar* and *ahavah sheainah teluyah bedavar* — love which is intrinsic and disinterested versus love which is extrinsic and tied to self-interest. What prompts the commentator to identify the love that man must bear for God with *ahavah sheainah teluyah bedavar* is, first, that this is the only lasting love, since it does not depend upon anything transient; second, this love is

9. “*Peirush*” on *Hilkhot Yesodai Hatorah*, 2:2 in most standard editions. Author is unknown.

purely motivated by thought of the beloved alone; and, third, this love alone answers to the Torah demand to love God exclusively “with all thy heart and with all thy soul . . .” with no room left for self-love of any kind. But if the love required by the *mizvah* is a disinterested one then we are back to the question: How does an awareness of God’s wisdom lead to this kind of love for God?

When we consider the teachings of Maimonides historically, against the background of Greek thought, we come up with quite a different interpretation which, while answering the original question, proves, I am afraid, unsatisfactory for other reasons. Influenced as he was by Aristotle, Maimonides’ philosophy seems, in many key respects, to fit the type of religion which Guttman calls “intellectualistic” and describes thus:

This type of religion regards God as Truth, as objective reality, as the supreme intellect. The ultimate in human perfection is for man to possess adequate knowledge which originates in the intellect itself. But the true source of man’s knowledge is in God since the human intellect is based on the divine intellect. If man, therefore, achieves adequate knowledge, this in itself proves his contact with the divine. His greatest felicity comes from God; therefore, he loves God. This is the intellectual love of God — *amor Dei intellectualis*.¹⁰

Guttman cites Aristotle and Spinoza as examples of this type of philosophy of religion. What is curious is that a system of thought which emphasizes knowledge and the intellect should end up by speaking of love of God which we take to be an emotion that, in ordinary life, is not usually associated with the intellect. Yet it was already Aristotle who, in trying to explain the force by which the prime mover whom he called God sets in motion the entire universe, did not think in terms of mechanical push or pull but said that “all things desire God” and in their “love” are drawn towards Him. Used in this context, the term “love” does not refer to a conscious affection but, rather, means an inherent functioning, a sort of non-mechanical attraction, a movement towards something. Even in terms of man, Aristotle believed that learning and acquiring knowledge was a pleasurable experience which brought in its wake a felt joy. But, on a philosophical level, he maintained that the activity of contemplation in which man exercises his intellect and, thus, fulfills his *telos*, results inevitably in a unique kind of satisfaction which is an essential element in the totality which we call happiness.

There are indications that Maimonides may have had this same thing in mind. Thus we find in the Guide:

“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart”: the sense of the entire passage is: make the knowledge of God the aim of all thy actions . . . We have already shown in the *Mishneh Torah* that this love is only possible when we comprehend the real nature of things and understand the divine wisdom displayed therein.

The true worship of God (and highest human perfection) is possible only

10. Y.J. Guttman, *On The Philosophy of Religion* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1976), p. 98.

when correct notions of Him have previously been conceived . . . the intellect is the link that joins you to Him . . . For it is said: "To love the Lord your God and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul" and, as we have shown several times, man's love of God is identical with his knowledge of Him.¹¹

It is clear that the knowledge which Maimonides is referring to, and which encompasses "a comprehension of all existence as it really is and God's wisdom contained therein," is really a philosophical knowledge. Also, the love that Maimonides speaks of is not the naive love of the average man but a philosophical, intellectual one.¹²

On this view, the passage in the Code in which Maimonides is explaining the *miẓvah* of *veahavtah* must be interpreted quite differently. We no longer have here a process consisting of distinct stages in which one goes from contemplation to understanding to love. We no longer have a suggestion by Maimonides as to how to generate love for God. What we seem to have before us is simply his definition of the term "love of God." By stating that the "love" comes "immediately" and "necessarily" and by stating that "love is only possible if . . .," he is saying, in effect, that this "knowledge of God" is the necessary and sufficient condition for "love of God." Indeed, this is exactly what he is saying when he tells us: "Love of God is identical with knowledge of Him." If we accept this interpretation, then Maimonides' comparison of the Love of God to the human love described in *The Song of Songs* must be seen as analogical in a very strict sense, i.e., where two very different things are called by the same name because of the resemblance of some secondary features.

Of course, the original problem is now solved. The Torah, according to this view, is not legislating love, it is simply commanding you to acquire the knowledge of God which is love of God. But can we accept this intellectualistic interpretation as the authentic explication of such a fundamental of Judaism as *veahavtah*?

In Maimonides' favor we should point out that certain key terms of the Torah do lend themselves to an intellectualistic interpretation. The prophetic literature abounds with urgings to acquire *da'at ha-Shem* which is translated "knowledge of God." It is also true that the word *lev*, translated "heart," can sometimes mean "understanding" so that the command "to love God with all your heart" can be taken to mean a love of God that comes through the intellect which can be equated with knowledge of God.¹³ The fact that Maimonides believed the intellect to link man with God encouraged the use of the love analogy which implied union. Here, again, is *devaikut*! Moreover, as Rawidowicz points out, the link of the *ratio* is not something stable but is capable of growing and diminishing and the

11. *Guide for the Perplexed*, I, 39; III, 28; III, 51.

12. Simon Rawidowicz, *Studies in Jewish Thought* (Phil.: Jewish Publication Society, 1974), p. 291.

13. *Guide*, I, 39.

one who determines this is man.¹⁴ It follows, therefore, that man, in order to maintain and strengthen the link with God (upon which Special Providence depends) must aspire to a “persistent contemplation” of God’s wisdom, an “absolute concentration of the thought on God.” This emphasis on constancy fits in well with the religious sentiment: “I place the Lord before me always” and can easily be expressed in emotional terms as “longing for God,” “lovesickness,” “passion for God,” or “my soul thirsts for the Lord, for the living God.”¹⁵

In spite of these points of resemblance, however, this approach, in its basic conception of the centrality of the intellect, does not seem compatible with the rest of Judaism. Many objective readings of Judaism, attentive to all aspects of the primary sources, suggest that we are dealing here not with an intellectualistic religion but with one in which morality is the major value.¹⁶ Carrying through Guttman’s typology, it follows that with such a religion certain other characteristics are usually associated: morality will be the way to achieve proximity to God; the divinity is necessarily a personal one (morality operates only between personal entities); the concept of love of God remains in the category of personal love even where the object of that love is infinite. What, then, are we to make of Maimonides’ love of God?

In a recent article, Rabbi J.B. Soloveitchik gives voice to this difficulty and argues that Maimonides is actually proposing an original doctrine in which the intellect and emotions fuse to produce an experience which is a combination of both. “Knowledge feeds the emotions but is also nourished by them.” This love of God is not a synonym for a cold cognition. It is, rather, an experience which possesses the rich affective tones of feeling but, at the same time, partakes of the free-willed activity of the conscious intellect. Rabbi Soloveitchik remains faithful, nonetheless, to Maimonides’ “intellectualistic” emphasis by concluding that what we have in Maimonides’ teaching of *amor Dei* is not so much the *logic de coeur* (reasons or logic of the heart) as the emotionalization of the intellect: “intellectual awareness giving forth sparks of active bubbling emotion.”¹⁷

I wish to propose a somewhat different interpretation of the *mizvah* of *ahavat ha-Shem* as suggested by Maimonides. I am not asserting that what I am about to say can be reconciled with the passages in the Guide. However, I do believe that it fits the words in the *Sefer ha-Mizvot* and, possibly, the passage in the Code. But, independent of Maimonides, my account can explain how one can achieve love of God in a way which does

14. Rawidowicz, *Op. cit.*, p. 279.

15. Psalms 42:3.

16. See S. Spero, *Morality Halakha and the Jewish Tradition* (N.Y.: KTAV and Yeshiva University Press, 1983).

17. Rabbi J.B. Soloveitchik, “But From Thence Ye Will Seek . . .” *Hadarom* No. 47 (Tishrei 5739): 67-69, footnote #2.

justice to the requirements of the Torah as well as to our present day understanding of reality.

The basis of my interpretation lies in a point underscored by Rabbi Soloveitchik and made by Guttman and Rawidowicz which is that, contrary to Aristotle, the Torah is clear that God loves man.¹⁸ Not only *ahavah* (love) but *heshek* (passion); not only *ahavah rabbah* but *ahavat olam*. As with the other attributes of God, the only real meaning we can give to the affection "love" is in terms of action predicates. When one human being loves another, it follows that he will want to do good and give pleasure to his beloved, aside from any question of the beloved being deserving. Similarly, therefore, if God loves man, it can be expected that the world will reflect that love; that God will endow human existence with "plus" factors which are not strictly necessary for His purposes but which give man pleasure; that God will impart to the world values which man can naturally apprehend, derive pleasure from and approve of.

This is, perhaps, the meaning of "And the Lord saw everything that He made and behold it was very good."¹⁹ If the individual parts of the universe were simply "good" (as indicated by God's pronouncement at the end of each day's work) how can they all together be pronounced "very good"? Can there be more in the sum than the totality of the parts? The answer is yes, for, while the word "good," which appears at the close of the description of the individual days of creation, signifies "good" in the sense of practical, useful and workable, the expression "very good," when pronounced over the completed world seen as an integrated unity, is the "good" of aesthetic value in a very broad sense. When the universe was all put together, God "saw" (indicating a phenomenon accessible to sensual perception) that in His love He had created a world that was not only useful but beautiful, a world endowed with the values of moral goodness, aesthetic beauty and cognitive truth which could be apprehended by man.²⁰

When man is asked, therefore, to contemplate the world, what do we expect him to find? Scattered references to nature as pointing to God such as Isaiah's, "Lift up your eyes heavenward and see — who created these?" and "The heavens declare the glories of God" are usually interpreted as the scriptural version of the teleological argument for the existence of God, in which we proceed from a recognition of the feature of design in the world to the existence of a designer. But Maimonides' call to a contemplation of nature was, as we have seen, to lead us to a love of God! In the light of our new appreciation of the world as a place suffused with value because of the love of God for man, let us look carefully at Maimonides' teaching in *Sefer ha-Mizvot*.

18. Guttman, *Op. cit.*, p. 94; Rawidowicz, *Op. cit.*, p. 293.

19. Gen. 1:3.

20. There is a reciprocal relationship between love and value. While the apprehension of value leads to love, love leads to the production of value.

The third commandment is that wherein He has commanded us concerning our love of Him, praised be He; that is to say, we are to dwell upon and contemplate His commandments, His statements and His deeds so that we may apprehend Him and thereby attain great pleasure, this constituting the love of Him with which we are charged. . . . We have thus explained to you that through this act of contemplation you will come to apprehend Him and reach that pleasure where love of Him will necessarily follow.

We notice immediately certain differences between the account in *Sefer ha-Mizvot* and the account that we examined earlier from the Code. While in the latter we are asked to contemplate "His deeds and creatures both wondrous and great," in the *Sefer ha-Mizvot* we are asked to contemplate "His commandments, His statements and His deeds."²¹ In addition, Maimonides here seems to describe a somewhat different process leading to the love of God:

1. contemplation; 2. apprehension of God; 3. experience of pleasure, and
4. love of God (which follows necessarily from 3.)

What is important here is the reference to pleasure which is not mentioned in the account in the *Mishneh Torah* and the reference to "apprehension" or "understanding of God" (*hasagah*) which, in the *Mishneh Torah* is referred to as God's "wisdom."

By "contemplation" we understand a procedure different from an examination undertaken, let us say, by a physician looking for abnormalities or traces of a specific disease. Contemplation consists of a riveting of attention and interest upon an object. One loses oneself in the object as in aesthetic contemplation and becomes a clear mirror of the object. This is not to suggest that contemplation is a purely passive experience. Contemplation has been described as a complex of activity — consciousness charged with time and change, a veritable "silent whirlpool." Contemplation is attentive, concentrated and alert, looking for meanings and relations but "bounded and made complete by an interest fulfilled within its borders."²² That is to say, one does not engage in this sort of activity for the sake of some practical need whose ends lie outside of this experience. Through contemplation we open ourselves to the object, in our case: "His

21. The only explanation that I can offer why, in his Code, Maimonides spoke only of the contemplation of nature and did not mention the commandments as a way to develop love for God, is that perhaps there he was attempting to explain not only love of God but, also, fear of God and wished to demonstrate that both can be generated by contemplating the very same things. Thus, he says, ". . . pondering upon these very things themselves, he immediately recoils in fear and dread realizing he is but a minute, wretched mortal . . ." The only thing that could generate in a person fear or awe as well as love is something which contains not only value which produces love but great and wondrous phenomena of overwhelming magnitude which can produce a sense of the sublime, a sense of awe. This could not easily be achieved by the commandments but only by "His deeds and creatures wondrous and great."

22. Arthur Berndtson, *Art Expression and Beauty* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc., 1969), p. 89.

commandments, His statements and His deeds.” But what we expect to find are intimations of value: In His commandments moral rightness and goodness; in His statements (“With Ten Statements the world was created”) cognitive truth ultimately based on order and simplicity; in His deeds, beauty, design and sublimity found in the natural world.

But to experience any of these values is to apprehend God because God is goodness and beauty and truth and the source of all such value experiences. This, then, can be taken as the meaning of Maimonides’ point that in contemplating God’s commandments, statements and deeds, we can arrive at an apprehension of God which is experienced as pleasure. Indeed, the feeling of pleasure is the immediate awareness of value. But this pleasure, like aesthetic appreciation, is enjoyed for its own intrinsic value. We enjoy a work of art as an end and we are motivated to look or to listen solely for the experience contained in that act. If you recall the description of pure disinterested love cited earlier in the commentary on the Code, the example was precisely one of aesthetic appreciation of intrinsic value.

The objectivity of this kind of appreciation extends not only to the object, i.e., the commandments, but also to the emotion occasioned by the object, i.e., the pleasure of the value experience. Although it is obviously *my* pleasure, it is experienced in a disinterested or distanced fashion, not as my property. Neither the object nor the emotion are considered in relation to the self but objectively, as intrinsic worth which I associate with God.

This apprehension of value feeling which is experienced as preferring, as desired and desirable, is already a form of loving. One wishes to get closer to the object of value, to remain in its presence, and what follows when this is associated with God is the desire, the passion, the love for God as described in human terms in *The Song of Songs*.

There have been several ethicists, like G.E. Moore, Max Scheler and N. Hartmann, who have defended the *a priori* nature of value feeling,²³ arguing that values belong to an absolute value realm, that they are given to us only in feeling but are independent of the feelings and transcend the attitudes that we have towards them. What is relevant to our problem is that all of these writers understand the apprehension of value to be a sort of cognition — a getting to know something significant about Being which would explain the constant conjunction which we seem to detect between knowledge of God and love of God. If love of God is based upon the discovery and apprehension of value in the world, then that is, itself, a form of knowing, inasmuch as value feelings are always directional and intentional. A value feeling that rejects and accepts, condemns and justifies is a cognitive, emotional act and is to be distinguished from “feeling states

23. W.H. Werkmeister, *Theories of Ethics* (Lincoln, Nebraska: Johnsen Pub. Co., 1961), Part II, Sec. I, Chap. 7.

such as being tired or elated or nauseated which are essentially passive physiological states of affairs."

This, then, is how we can go about observing the important *mizvah* of *ahavat ha-Shem* as suggested by the comments of Maimonides. God, in His love for man, has impregnated His creation with values which are a very real dimension of our world and which man can apprehend as an immediate pleasurable feeling of approval. Man need only open himself to a disinterested contemplation of these values of moral rightness or, perhaps, holiness in the Torah and to an aesthetic appreciation of nature and it will result in love for the God who is Himself these values growing into a passionate longing to draw closer to Him.²⁴

24. This approach ties in with the notion of God as artist and the world as His work of art. Tolstoy wrote that art is the great medium through which human beings can communicate their emotions. God, then, in His love for man, has expressed His love through His creative work — this beautiful world — which man can contemplate aesthetically, receive the message of love and respond, in turn, with great pleasure and love to the artist.

Qumran — The Essenes

DONIA CLENMAN

Nothing but sun.

Heat.

Flies.

And more sun.

The Lord asleep in a cave.

How you toiled

to bring water

into an angry land.

Channels, cisterns,

aqueducts,

even a mikvah

for unsmiling rain.

Living on few dates and barley,

but washing,

washing,

washing,

to praise a clean Lord.

DONIA CLENMAN is a writer of short stories, librettos and poetry. Her work has been published in Canada and the United States.

Two That Are One — Sibling Rivalry in Genesis

NORMAN J. COHEN

A NUMBER OF YEARS AGO, HARVEY COX argued that the secular city was a concretization of the Kingdom of God and that technology was its messianic instrument.¹ He was convinced that humankind has the capacity to solve the many problems confronting it and to perfect its world.

However, the past fifty years of human experience have cast doubt upon Cox's theory. Auschwitz, Hiroshima, political assassinations, a rampant drug culture, Watergate, an expanding sea of violence and our ever-growing ability to destroy our planet with nuclear weapons all underscore the possibility that secular culture is void of ultimate values and cannot provide us with a sense of priorities. If that be the case, then we who are committed to improving ourselves and making this world a better place to live must seek meaning elsewhere.

As Jews who believe in God and see ourselves as being part of a Jewish continuum, we have but one source to tap in our search for *kedushah*, holiness, and in our desire for spiritual growth — the Jewish tradition. We are compelled both to immerse ourselves in the totality of the tradition in order to gain an understanding of who we are as Jews and as human beings as well as to begin to read the Torah, the core of the tradition, more seriously. Though I am sure only a very small percentage of Jews believe that the Bible has any relevancy for their lives, it may be, as Stephen Crites wrote, that we can gain a sense of the meaning of our own "baffling dramas" from our sacred stories. This sense of meaning, in turn, can affect the form of our experience and the style of our action.²

In order to gain insight about ourselves from the biblical text, it is incumbent upon us to read the text slowly, attending closely to all of its details. Since biblical narratives are so very terse and the sketches of biblical characters so fragmentary, the inclusion or exclusion of any particular lexical item may be of great significance. Choices of individual words,

1. Harvey Cox, *The Secular City* (Toronto, 1969), passim, esp. pp. 95-98.

2. Stephen Crites, "The Narrative Quality of Experience," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 39 (1971): 304.

NORMAN J. COHEN is associate professor of Midrash at H.U.C.-J.I.R., New York, N.Y.

syntax, narrative structure, the repetition of particular motifs as well as selective silences can all be seen as crucial threads in the weaving of a fabric of meaningful exposition. It is precisely because biblical narrative style is so laconic that each and every piece of information can lead to multiple interpretations. As Robert Alter has stated, “the sparsely sketched foreground of the biblical narrative implies a large background, dense with possibilities.”³

It is this sketchiness which invariably draws us to the personalities in the Book of Genesis as well as provides us with a great deal of latitude in our reading of the Genesis narratives. We are led by the biblical writers through a string of stories of varying clarity which only occasionally are illuminated by bits of data and, as a result, whet our imaginations and invite us to explore them in greater depth. We are confronted by vaguely etched descriptions of characters who, generation after generation, struggle with themselves and especially with their siblings. Genesis seems to be made up of a series of stories of conflict and rivalry which embody the basic tension between contrasting personalities, with whom we can identify if we are at all introspective.

Such conflicts of different types are probably adapted from common folkloristic patterns, like the dispute between the shepherd and farmer,⁴ the conflict between two brothers,⁵ and the clash of contrasting powers.⁶ Yet, it should be noted that while these stories clearly represent the tension between contrary aspects of life — the Yin and Yang — in nature,⁷ many of them also stress the similarity between the seemingly disparate elements. For example, in Egyptian mythology, Osiris, who personifies the setting of the sun, is confused with his son, Horus, the rising sun. Both are renewed daily and at times seem to be both husband and son to the same woman, Isis.⁸ It is ironic that the very forces in conflict seem to be parts of one and the same being, with a constant shift between moments of contrast and moments of identification. Yet, mythological man perceived

3. Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York, 1981), p. 114.

4. See, for example, *Dumizi and Enkimdu: The Dispute Between the Shepherd-God and the Farmer-God*, a Sumerian poem similar to the Cain/Abel motif, in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, ed. James Pritchard, 2nd ed. (Princeton, 1955), pp. 41-42.

5. E.g., *Anubis and Bata: The Story of the Two Brothers* in *ANET*, pp. 23-25, an Egyptian tale in which a body of water separates the two until a resolution comes as the sun rises.

6. For example, the conflict between Gilgamesh, the king of Erech, and Enkidu, the creature of Enki, in *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, Tablet I, Column 2, in which Enkidu is described in terms very similar to Esau. The battle seems to be between the civilized human and the wild, hairy savage.

7. In Chinese thought, Yin (the dark side) and Yang (the sunny side) are seen as the two complementary forces or principles that make up all life. Yin is conceived of as earth, female, dark, passive, absorbing and is identified with water, while Yang is heaven, male, light, active, penetrating and is symbolized by the mountains. Their interplay is a description of the actual process of the universe.

8. See, for example, *The Contest of Horus and Seth for the Rule* in *ANET*, pp. 14-17.

the conflicts and contrasts only in external nature, never suspecting that he was really seeing the paradoxical nature of his own personality.

Modern psychology has taught us that each human being has a multifarious personality which is made up of a variety of positive and negative tendencies. We tend to repress the negative components or "shadows," as Carl Jung labelled them,⁹ which consequently function as part of our unconscious. For some of us, these "inferior" qualities have gained a stronghold and dominate our lives, though we may be unaware of them. Yet, if we become conscious of our shadows, we have a chance to channel those tendencies towards constructive ends. This cannot take place, however, until we recognize the darker aspects of our personalities, admitting to ourselves that these forces are real and present within us. That is the first step in the process of growth, i.e., integration of the disparate elements in us into a functioning whole.

It has been correctly noted that the biblical narratives in particular can serve as vehicles of insight into the abiding polarities of our own personalities, for it was the biblical writers who sought to know, through their art, what it is like to be human, with all of our conflicting qualities — greed, lust, piety, courage, compassion and much more.¹⁰ Since it is through a wrestling with the sacred stories of Torah and with the complex personages therein delineated that we can begin to see ourselves for what we are, it is precisely upon the recreation of the texts of the Bible, i.e., the creation of modern midrash, that our search for spirituality is contingent. Yet, whereas the process of the creation of a text is finite, its recreation is infinite. It is an open task for each new generation, each new reader, and is never to be considered complete. For whenever a reader creates a meaningful modern midrash, an interpretation or expansion of the text which helps him as a Jew and as a human being and enables him to grow, the Torah not only will come alive, but it will be operative in his life.¹¹

I. *The Many Sides of Adam*

From the very beginning of Genesis, the Torah seems to emphasize the multifaceted nature of the human being. This is evident in the interchanging of singular and plural subjects and objects in several of the

9. Carl Jung, *Collected Works*, 2nd ed. (Princeton, 1969), vol. 9:8-9, 123; vol. 11:76-78, 197-98; and vol. 14:497.

10. Alter, *Op. cit.*, p. 176. See also Arthur Waskow, *Godwrestling* (New York, 1978), pp. 10-11.

11. J.P. Fokkelman, *Narrative Art in Genesis* (Amsterdam, 1975), pp. 3-4. The author correctly argues that the process of recreating the text can be independent of the investigation into how the text came to be. For, as he points out, the birth of the text resembles that of a human being: the umbilical cord which connected the text with its time and the people who produced it is severed. Once its existence becomes fact, the text begins to lead a life of its own.

verses describing the creation of Adam. For example, Genesis 1:26-28 reads:

And God said: "Let us make *Adam* in our image, after our likeness, and let *them* have dominion over the fish." . . . And God created Adam in His image, in the image of God He created *him*, *male* and *female* He created *them*. And God blessed *them*, and God said to them: "Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the Earth."¹²

This notion that each human being, each of us, is made up of different, sometimes conflicting, forces is further underscored by the well-known description of Eve as "*ezer kenegdo*" in Genesis 2:18. Though generally translated as "help meet," the term *keneged* can mean "opposite" or "over against," thus allowing us to interpret the phrase as stressing that the male and female represent not only different components of the human being's sexuality, but, more generally, the contrary forces within each of us. On the one hand, Adam was created from the earth and his physical being is very much a part of this world, while, on the other hand, he was formed in the image and likeness of the Divine. In this light, the basic polarities of our personalities stem essentially from the contradiction between our physical and spiritual aspects.

The fact that each human has more than one side can also be seen in the Torah's account of the creation of Eve. In Genesis 2:21-24 we read:

And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man and he slept, and He took one of his ribs and closed up the place with flesh in its stead. And the rib (*ha-sela*) which the Lord God had taken from the man made He a woman and brought her unto the man. And the man said: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman because she was taken out of man. Therefore, shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh."

According to several midrashim, the word *sela* should not be understood as "rib" but rather as "side." For example, in *Bereshit Rabbah* 8:1, R. Samuel b. Nahman tries to prove that *sela* means side by quoting Exodus 26:20, which is part of the description of the building of the *Mishkan*: "[And you shall make] for the second side (*sela*) of the Tabernacle, the northern side, twenty boards."¹³ From this perspective, Eve, the female, is viewed as one side of primal man, one part of an original whole ("bone of my bones") whose components bear much similarity (man/woman — *ish/ishah*).

However, since each of us is a composite of different tendencies and forces, we must attempt to integrate our many sides and, as the Torah states, "to cleave to our other half and become one flesh" — to recreate the

12. See also Genesis 5:1. In the Midrash, the shifts between singular and plural were interpreted to mean that Adam was a hermaphrodite, male and female in one person. See in this regard, *Bereshit Rabbah* 8:1, 17:6, Midrash on Psalms 139:5, and *Yalqut Shim'oni* 1:20.

13. See also the *Targumim* to Exodus 26:20 and Midrash on Psalms 139:5, in which Rav maintains that *Sela* means "face."

primal unity which was Adam's before the bifurcation into male/female, life/death, good/evil.

II. *Jacob and Esau*

The tension between our different sides and the struggle to achieve wholeness is also apparent in the sibling rivalries in the Book of Genesis. In almost every generation we are confronted by pairs of characters who, at one and the same time, are contrasting personalities but possess certain similar qualities and share some of the same reaction patterns. Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, Leah and Rachel, Joseph and his brothers all can be viewed as representing halves of a bifurcated whole. They symbolize the dual nature of "everyperson" and by wrestling with them we can come in touch with the different sides of our own personalities and begin to reconcile them. For, just as these sibling conflicts are not irreconcilable, so, too, the different tendencies in each of us can be integrated into a better functioning entity. Among all the rivalries, the relationships involving Jacob/Esau — Leah/Rachel are the most fascinating and, therefore, have perhaps the greatest potential to teach us about ourselves.

Even prior to their birth, Jacob and Esau are presented as parts of the same whole, twins who struggle with each other in their mother's womb. Though very similar, they are independent and must be separated, for they cannot live as one. Genesis 25:23 states:

Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples shall be separated (*yipparedu*) from your bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people, and the elder shall serve the younger.

As J.P. Fokkelman has pointed out, the importance of the word *yipparedu* is evident in the breakdown of the rhythm of the passage.¹⁴ Its insertion breaks the regular pattern of rows of three and serves to emphasize the separation and conflict between the two entities which are really part and parcel of an original whole. It is interesting to note in this regard that while Jacob and Esau are twins, "*tomim*" in the language of Genesis 25:24, Jacob himself is described as being "*tam*" (v. 27), generally translated as quiet or plain. From a linguistic point of view, Jacob (*tam*), along with his brother Esau, is viewed as part of a greater whole (*tomim*).

Yet, based upon their descriptions, Jacob and Esau appear to be diametrically opposed to one another. Esau is a cunning hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob is a simple, quiet man who prefers to remain at home (Gen. 25:27).¹⁵ Esau is also portrayed as being of ruddy complexion (Gen. 25:25) and very hairy (25:25, 27:11), in contrast to his younger brother who is said to be very smooth-skinned (27:11).¹⁶ In addition, Esau is loved

14. Fokkelman, *Op. cit.*, p. 89.

15. It is ironic that Jacob is described as being "*tam*," which is used in many cases to mean naive, innocent, or morally pure, since it is he who deceives both his father and brother.

by his father, Isaac, while Jacob is the object of his mother's affection (25:28). Though it might be that different qualities as well as the order of birth drew parents to one or the other of their children, it still seems ironic that Isaac would be attracted at all by Esau, with whom he seemingly had little in common. If anything, Esau was much like Isaac's half-brother, Ishmael. Perhaps, however, it was his son's nature which reminded Isaac of his long lost sibling, his "other half," and drew him to Esau. In any event, the affinity between Esau and Ishmael is clear; Esau even married Mahalat, Ishmael's daughter (Gen. 28:9). Beyond all of this, the events in which the contrast between Jacob and Esau seems most apparent are the stealing of the birthright and blessing in chapter 27 and the reunion of the two in chapters 32-33. At first, Esau is pictured as a volatile character who is caught up in the moment and can think only of his ravenous hunger, while Jacob is portrayed as shrewd and calculating. Later, Esau appears strong yet forgiving when Jacob is still reticent and unsure.

Nevertheless, it is precisely in these narratives, where the contrast seems the most obvious, that Jacob and Esau evidence a surprising degree of similarity. At times they utter the same words and act in the same manner. For example, Isaac, who is blind and confused to the point where he cannot differentiate between his two sons, asks on two separate occasions, "Who are you" (27:19 and 32), to which both Jacob and Esau reply in almost identical fashion: "I am your first born son, Esau." Similarly, in chapter 33 each one "lifted up his eyes and saw [his brother]" (vv. 1 and 3) and both "passed in front" as a sign of honor, Jacob in greeting Esau (v. 3) and Esau at his brother's request (v. 14).

These striking similarities seem to buttress our treatment of Jacob and Esau as symbolic sides of one and the same person and provide solutions to two nagging questions inherent in the story. First, even if we were to accept the notion that Isaac, who was growing old, was afflicted by blindness and perhaps a touch of senility, it is inconceivable that he could be totally fooled by Jacob and Rebekkah's ruse. When Isaac asks, "Who are you?" (27:18), he knows that it is his son standing in front of him, but he is not sure of the boy's attitude and make-up at the moment. Is he coming as Jacob (v. 22 "the voice is the voice of Jacob") or as Esau ("the hands are the hands of Esau")? Like contemporary parents, Jacob does not recognize his child because he seems different: "And he discerned him not because his hands were hairy like those of his brother, Esau" (v. 23). Jacob is confused by his son's nature because he has not acted in a consistent manner and Jacob therefore asks, "Who are you, my son?" — What are you about? I don't know this side of you¹⁷ . . . You're different!" The sec-

16. The description of Jacob as "*halak*," smooth, could be taken as a double entendre, i.e., Jacob was a conniver!

17. Note how even though he is met by deception and dishonesty, Isaac nevertheless responds openly to his son: "*Here I am (hineni)*" . . . ready to do whatever our relationship demands. Jacob's openness can teach us much about ourselves: we must be willing to

ond problem is that even if Esau were so angry that he killed Jacob, why would Rebekkah say that “she would be bereaved of both of them in one day” (27:45)? Since she obviously had no great affection for Esau, we cannot simply say that if Esau killed Jacob, she would cut him off and treat him as if he were dead — she already had rejected him! However, if Jacob and Esau are symbolically the same person, then the death of one is tantamount to the death of both.

The struggle to integrate the conflicting sides in the Jacob-Esau narratives is very apparent in chapters 32 and 33 which describe Jacob wrestling at the Jabbok and the reunion with Esau which follows. From the very outset, even prior to sending gifts to Esau and dividing his camp in half in order to protect his family and possessions, Jacob called the name of the place Maḥanaim, two camps. It was as if he were focussing our attention upon the symbolism attached to Jacob/Esau. It was there at Maḥanaim, in the dark of night, that Jacob “wrestled with a man until the breaking of the day” (32:25). Though the tradition generally understands this passage as meaning that Jacob fought with an angel of God,¹⁸ based upon a parallel in Hosea 12:4-5, the text does say that he struggled with a *man* (*ish*). If the text is read a bit more literally, there are really only two possibilities: either Jacob struggled with Esau, who crossed the Jabbok in anticipation of the meeting with his brother, or he fought with himself, with his other side which had to be dealt with before he could be at peace. There are several midrashic passages which interpret the “man” in the story as Esau. For example, *Genesis Rabbah* 78:3:

“For you have striven with celestial beings and with mortals and have prevailed” (32:29). “With mortals and prevailed” — by that, Esau and his chiefs are meant.¹⁹

Yet, some modern midrashists have posited that Jacob fought with himself, with his weaker, darker side.²⁰ Perhaps that is the meaning of *maʿavar Yabbok*, the ford of Jabbok — that Jacob (Yaʿakov) [note the inversion] bridged the two sides of his personality. However, whether the opponent was Esau or Jacob himself, it behooves us to understand the story as the symbolic struggle of the human being to reconcile the conflicting sides of his nature. Each of us, like Jacob, must come to grips with the godly as well as the human qualities we possess and each of us, like him, has the ability to overcome them.

The ever-present tension between the conflicting sides of our per-

respond in the context of relationship, even though that makes us vulnerable and we may be hurt.

18. E.g., *Midrash Tanḥuma*, ed. Buber, *Vayishlah* #7 and B.T. *Hullin* 91a.

19. In several passages, the struggle is pictured as being between the Guardian Prince of Esau and Jacob. See, in this regard, *Genesis Rabbah* 77:3, 78:3 and *Midrash Aggadah* to Genesis 32:25.

20. For example, Elie Wiesel, *Messengers of God: Biblical Portraits and Legends* (New York, 1976), pp. 124-25.

sonalities as well as the possibility of achieving some sense of wholeness and inner peace is underscored at the end of the Jacob/Esau material when they succeed in turning contention into love. The shift is evident in the choice of words used in the story. At the moment of reconciliation, Esau is pictured as running (*va-yaraz*) toward Jacob. The very same root is used at the outset of the Jacob-Esau narrative (*va-yitrozazu*) describing the conflict between the two. The use of the same Hebrew root — *razaz* and *ruz* — underscores the movement from conflict to unity.

Similarly, when Jacob wrestled with his other half, Genesis 32:24-26 states that

Jacob was left alone and there wrestled (*va-ye'avek*) a man with him until the breaking of the day. . . . And the hollow of Jacob's thigh was strained as he wrestled (*be-he'avko*) with him.

In comparison, in describing the reconciliation between Jacob and Esau, the Torah said:

And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him (*va-yehabbkehu*) and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept (33:4).

The sound play between the roots *ʔbk* (struggle, wrestle) and *hbk* (embrace) demonstrates that it is possible to transform a stranglehold into an embrace, to overcome the disparate forces within us and become a better functioning whole. Similarly, the words "*va-yippol 'al šavarav*" (he fell on his neck) and "*va-yishakehu*" (he kissed him) could also be taken to mean "he attacked him" and "he bit him," respectively,²¹ thus highlighting the dialectic tension between our two halves and, at the same time, the potential for harmonizing them.

Indeed, at the end of the story, some degree of reconciliation is achieved. The change in the two brothers is beautifully symbolized by another play on words — the shift from *maḥaneh* (camp) to *minḥah* (gift). In anticipation of his reunion with Esau, Jacob readies for battle by dividing his retinue into two armed camps. Yet, the conflict dissipates and, instead of attacking or being attacked, Jacob sends his brother a gift which was a sign of affection and love, a symbol of the renewal of their relationship. The paralleling of the two terms is most evident in Genesis 33:8-10:

And he (Esau) said: "What do you intend by all this camp (*maḥaneh*) which I met?" And he (Jacob) replied: "To find favor in the sight of my lord. . . . If now I find favor in your sight, then accept my gift (*minḥati*)."

The solidification of their relationship seems to have been achieved since, following Jacob's gift offering, Esau suggests: "Let us take our journey and let us go [together] and I will go alongside of you (*le-negdekha*)" [33:12]. Though most translations take the term "*le-negdekha*" to mean "before you," it seems obvious that it should be translated as "alongside,"

21. Several classical midrashim interpret the word *va-yishakehu* as "he bit him." As an illustration, see *Genesis Rabbah* 78:9.

or “next to,” since only two verses later Jacob asks Esau to “pass before him” (33:14). Esau and Jacob were to travel to Seir together, united as they never had been before.

Yet, lest we think that the reconciliation was complete, the text goes on to emphasize the continued separation and struggle by noting that Jacob went his own way, travelling first to Sukkot and then to Shechem (33:17-18). Even though he was to have accompanied his brother to the land of Edom where presumably they would live together in peace, it was not to be. Jacob and Esau could not yet be united, as the biblical writer stresses in Genesis 36:6-8:

And Esau took his wives and his sons and his daughters and all the souls of his house and his cattle . . . and all his possessions . . . and went into a land far away from his brother, Jacob. For their substance was too great for them to dwell together; and the land of their sojournings could not bear them because of their cattle. And Esau dwelt in the mountain land of Seir. . . .

In addition, in order to underscore that the transformation in Jacob/Esau was not permanent, the biblical writer continues to call Jacob by that name even after the change to Israel in Genesis 32:29. Though the text symbolically represents the transformation that took place by stating that Jacob’s name was to be Israel because he had “striven with the divine and human elements [in him] and had prevailed,” in Genesis 35:9-10 God again appears to Jacob to remind him of the name change:

And God appeared to Jacob again . . . and said to him: “Your name shall not be anymore called Jacob, but Israel is your name;” and He called his name Israel.

It was as if Jacob had not fully integrated his different sides and was yet to achieve wholeness. Change is slow and although we may be in touch with the different tendencies within us, we find that there are times when we are unable to control them and channel them in constructive ways.

III. *Leah and Rachel*

Like Jacob and Esau, the two daughters of Laban can be seen as symbolic contrasting sides of “everyperson.” Yet, since they are parts of the same whole, they also bear unexpected, even ironic, similarities. At different points of the narrative in chapters 29-30 of Genesis it is even difficult to tell them apart, based upon their expressed feelings and actions.

On the surface, at least, there appears to be a clear contrast between Leah and Rachel. Rachel is described as possessing great physical beauty (“Rachel was of beautiful form and appearance”), while it is said that Leah’s eyes were weak [29:17]. If the descriptions are meant to give us a substantive comparison between them, then perhaps the term “*rakhot*” should be interpreted not as “weak,” but rather as “soft” or “tender.” In this light, Rachel was outwardly beautiful, but her sister may have been more sensitive and kind — tender of spirit. This possible reading under-

scores an even greater contrast between the two sisters than is apparent at first glance. The irony of course is that Rachel, who was more beautiful, was barren and it was Leah who was very fertile. Genesis 29:31 reads: "God opened [Leah's] womb, but Rachel was *barren* (*'akarah*)." Taken more literally, however, Rachel, who went along with her father in duping Jacob in order to marry him first, is described as "*being void*" of concern and sensitivity, in contrast to her older sister. This interpretation tends to enhance Leah's importance and to place Rachel in a more negative light. It also explains the choice of words in Genesis 29:16 which describe Leah as being "*ha-gedolah*" (the bigger one), while Rachel was "*ha-ketanah*" (the smaller one). If we compare this description with the parallel in 29:26, in which Leah is referred to as "*ha-bekhirah*" (the firstborn) and Rachel as "*ha-se'irah*" (the younger), then the words *gedolah* and *ketanah* could be taken as commenting not upon the age of the girls but upon their spirituality. If this be the case, then it is no wonder that Judah, the progenitor of the messianic line according to the tradition, was Leah's son. In any event, Leah and Rachel seem to be clear contrasts of personality and character.

Nevertheless, the sisters manifest some of the same characteristics and at times react in similar ways. So much so that, occasionally, they say and do things that the reader expects from the other. Note, in this regard, how, after learning in chapter 29 of Leah's insecurity, her negative self-perception, her jealousy of her sister and her feeling that only through childbirth could she be happy, we read in the very next chapter:

And when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said to Jacob: "Give me children or else I will die" (30:1).

For the very first time in the narrative, Rachel expresses her feelings, but ironically it sounds as if Leah is talking. Instead of the Rachel we expect, who is secure in her husband's love, we are confronted by an insecure woman who is both jealous and afflicted, not unlike Leah, her other half. Similarly, in the first part of the story (chapter 39), Rachel is portrayed as very aggressive: she tends her father's flock, wins Jacob's love and usurps Leah's place as Jacob's first wife. Later, however, it is Leah who, after bartering the mandrakes brought to her by Reuben for the right to sleep with Jacob,²² goes out to the field to insure her prize (30:14-16). Whatever the mandrakes represent,²³ it is evident that Rachel is desperately jealous that

22. It is interesting to note, with regard to the connections between Leah and Rachel, that Reuben, Leah's firstborn, is the one who sleeps with Rachel's handmaid, Bilhah, in Genesis 35:21.

23. According to Theodore Gaster, in his *Myth, Legend, Custom in the Old Testament* (New York, 1969), p. 200, the mandrake seems to have been used as an aphrodisiac as well as an antidote to barrenness. We know, for example, that Aphrodite, the goddess of love, was occasionally called "our lady of the mandrake." Of course, the Hebrew root of *duda'im* is connected to the word "love" and the popular term in English for mandrake is "the love apple." In addition, the use of the mandrake as an aphrodisiac is evident in the Song of Songs 7:14, where the maiden seduces her lover by storing up fragrant mandrakes.

Leah has them and Leah, in turn, seems to maintain a position of power. Again, the roles seem to be reversed — Leah is now the aggressive, self-assured sister.

Just as in the Jacob/Esau material, the juxtaposition of obvious contrasts and glaring similarities between Leah and Rachel can lead to the interpretation that they represent two sides of one being, symbols of our multifaceted natures. This modern midrashic reading is further buttressed by several interesting details that stand out in the narrative. For example, when Rachel's handmaid provides her with her first son, the text states: "Rachel said: 'God has judged me (*danani*) and has also heard (*shama*) my voice, and has given me a son.' Therefore she called him Dan" (30:6). This is the only case in which two statements are made by either Leah or Rachel following the birth of one of their children and, interestingly, the name given, Dan, matches the first and not the second. Even though both she and Leah (29:33) say that God heard (*shama*) their pleas, Rachel cannot name her child *Shimon* or a variation thereof, since Leah has already given her second child that name. In a similar vein, when Leah gives birth to Dinah, Jacob's only daughter, she does not utter a single word and, as a result, the choice of the child's name is unexplained. All that the text says is "and afterwards she (Leah) bore a daughter and called her name Dinah" (30:21). However, since Rachel already has a son named Dan and has explained his name (30:6), there is no reason to add an explanation here. Leah and Rachel have children who bear the same name! Finally, the Torah does not record Leah's death, which seems strange, especially in comparison with the death notices of the other patriarchs and matriarchs. Yet, if Leah and Rachel are symbolic sides of the same person, it is not necessary to mention the death of both of them.

In addition, our interpretation of the Leah/Rachel material enables us to respond in a new way to some of the difficulties inherent in the biblical text. For example, it seems impossible that Jacob could have been fooled by Leah (29:23-25) after having resided in Laban's house for seven years. How could he have thought that it was Rachel with whom he slept all night and have been so surprised in the morning (29:25)? Perhaps, however, the woman he slept with during the night was the same as the one he confronted in the light of day, though she may have exhibited different qualities at different times. Just as Isaac could not distinguish between his two sons, Jacob and Esau, because they were one and the same person, so, too, Jacob could not tell the difference between Rachel and Leah.

Yet, the parallels between the Jacob/Esau and Leah/Rachel material go far beyond the fact that Jacob, who seemingly fooled his father and thereby usurped the blessing of the firstborn, was fooled in turn by Leah, Laban's firstborn daughter. The key theme-words used by the biblical writer(s) in the two sets of narratives are identical. In Genesis 27:35, Isaac tells Esau: "Your brother came with guile (*be-mirmah*) and took away the

blessing,” while later (29:25) Jacob asks Laban: “Why have you beguiled me (*rimmitani*)?” Furthermore, Laban’s response to Jacob’s question seems clearly to allude to Jacob’s prior dealing with Esau. Laban retorts: “It is not done thus *in our* place to give the younger [in marriage] before the first-born” (29:26). It is as if Laban were saying, “In your place, perhaps, the younger is set before the firstborn, but not so here!!” In addition to these parallels, another important aspect of the two storylines is the same. In both, an exchange is made in which one of the participants gives up an established right for a vegetable substance: Esau sells his birthright for a pot of lentil soup and Rachel exchanges her “right” to lie with Jacob for Leah’s mandrakes. In the first case, Jacob takes advantage of his brother’s willingness to barter away his status, while in the second Jacob himself is the object that is bartered by Rachel.

From the vantage point, however, the most important similarity between the two narratives is the fact that, in both, the siblings wrestled with each other, and the Torah emphasizes this point on several occasions. Jacob wrestled with Esau in Rebekkah’s womb (25:22) as well as at the Jabbok (32:25). In the latter incident, the text states:

And there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of day. And when he saw that he prevailed (*yakhol*) not against him . . . And he said: “Your name shall be Israel, for you have striven with the divine (*’elohim*) and the human and have prevailed (*tukhal*).”

Similarly, Rachel wrestled with Leah and in describing the struggle, she used some of the same wording as found in the Jacob/Esau material. Rachel says: “With God-like wrestlings (*naftulei ’elohim*) have I wrestled with my sister and I have prevailed (*yakholti*)” [30:8].

IV. Conclusions

From this material, it seems that both the Jacob/Esau and Leah/Rachel narratives can be viewed as symbolic representations of the struggle between the different sides of his nature within the human being. Just as Jacob/Esau and Leah/Rachel wrestle with each other and seek a reconciliation, we also must wrestle with the various aspects of our own personalities and in so doing we may achieve some measure of integration and wholeness.

More generally, we have seen how a confrontation with, and immersion into, the sacred stories of Torah can provide us with much insight into ourselves as human beings and as Jews. By taking Torah seriously, reading it closely and creating midrashic interpretations for our own day, we can begin to gain a sense of who we are and the kinds of lives that we should be living. Doing modern midrash cannot only insure that the Torah will come alive, it can be a crucial vehicle in our desperate struggle for spiritual growth.

The Scarred Countenance: Inconstancy in the Book of Hosea

KARL A. PLANK

I

... it was the first time I saw your eyes that way — betrayed, screaming that I'd made you feel you didn't exist — ... it closed a circle for me. And I wanted to face the worst thing I could imagine — that I could not love. And I wrote it down, like a letter from hell.

Arthur Miller, *After the Fall*¹

THE IMAGERY AND THEMES OF HOSEA CAST the prophet as the interpreter of a love story, a story which points to the betrayed lover's quandary as he encounters the perpetual faithlessness of his beloved. This tale contrasts YHWH's steadfast love for Israel with Israel's fleeting love for YHWH and, thereby, poses the problem of inconstancy in the face of the demand for faithfulness. Hosea attests the pervasive character of this problem by acknowledging that inconstancy has always dwelt in the midst of Israel (9:10; 11:1f). Moreover, the chroniclers of subsequent religious history similarly remind us that the confession of all persons is hypocritical when judged by the constancy of their deeds.² How, then, do we reciprocate and maintain the steadfastness of love amidst the dynamic and often threatening mode of our existence? Dare we make promises which pledge the constancy of our response? The answer is written on a scroll of agony which records the screams of the betrayed lover, made to feel as if he did not exist, and outlines the enslaving circle of the worst thing imaginable — that the loved one cannot love in return.

1. Arthur Miller, *After the Fall* (New York: Viking Press, 1964). Subsequent references to this play at the beginning of each section are from this same edition.

2. Thus, James M. Ward, *Hosea: A Theological Commentary* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 125.

KARL A. PLANK is an instructor in the department of religion at Davidson College, Davidson, North Carolina.

II

Who can be innocent again on this mountain of skulls?

Arthur Miller, *After the Fall*
 Their deeds will not permit them to return to their God,
 for a spirit of harlotry is in their midst,
 and YHWH they do not know.

Hosea 5:4

Hosea's Israel, in her defilement, has become estranged from YHWH. Although that corruption occurs prominently within her worship, it cannot easily be reduced to cultic impurity. Instead, it partakes of a deeper contamination and shows cultic impurity to be only a symptom of the whorish disease infecting Israel.³ Her estrangement grows not from isolated acts or deliberate covenant breaking that can be corrected by ritual purification, but from embracing "the spirit of harlotry" and creating a breach of trust⁴ that can be bridged only by the complete turning of Israel to YHWH.⁵ The possibility of a complete turning, however, is continually frustrated by the nature of the estrangement, which, through repeated acts of distrust, destroys the path of return. Wounds of distrust cut deep and leave permanent and sensitive scars into which the path of return inevitably leads. The resulting irony is acute, for the relationship fragmented by distrust can be restored only by the complete turning to the betrayed one. Yet the act of distrust destroys that possibility by abolishing the freedom for return. Restoration of relationship, the proffering of forgiveness, the acceptance which acknowledges and completes return, all remain the prerogative of the violated one, not the right or freedom of the violator.⁶

3. Of this "symptom" James Luther Mays writes, "By turning to the fertility cult of Baal (cf. 1:2; 4:11-14) and engaging in its sexual rites, the people have become unclean like an adulterous woman (6:10). Uncleaness disqualifies a person for access to God, makes one ineligible for participation in the cult. Both the sexual and the pagan nature of Israel's current cult contribute to their state of defilement." *Hosea* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975), p. 83.

4. In Hosea the expression of distrust is set in the context of Israel's transition from a semi-nomadic culture to an agricultural one. This transition, when coupled with the factors of economic hardship and the pressing concern for the necessities of life, suggests that Israel's harlotrous participation in the fertility cult was rooted in the distrust of YHWH's ability to sustain Israel in the new cultural environment and threatening circumstances. A similar argument should be applied to Israel's "international gamesmanship" reflected in the book of Hosea. Israel's politically cunning activity suggests the distrust of YHWH's ability to protect Israel in the face of military threat.

5. The notion of "turning" or "return" constitutes a major concept in Jewish theology. Martin Buber interprets it in the following way: "*Teshuvah*, return, is the name given to the act of decision in its ultimate intensification; it denotes the decisive turning point in a man's life, the renewing, total reversal in the midst of the normal course of his existence. When in the midst of 'sin,' that is, in decisionlessness, the will to decision awakens, the cover of routine life bursts open, and primal forces break through, storming heavenward. In the man who returns, creation begins anew." *On Judaism* (New York: Schocken, 1973), p. 67.

6. In terms of Buber's notion of return as decision for the other — only the other, the vio-

The marital imagery, so abundant in Hosea, is especially provocative in this context. As an act of covenant, marriage reflects a central act of trust. It partakes of a stance between covenant partners which dares the revelation and giving of one's precious self into the care and keeping of the other. The trusting stance gives rise to a willingness to know and be known, resulting in an intimate knowledge which sustains, nourishes, and encourages the constancy of the relationship. Thus, trust, intimacy and faithfulness are so integrally bound up with each other that to deny one element precludes the possibility of the others. To engage in acts of distrust severs the life-supporting roots of faithfulness.

The intimate knowledge of the marriage covenant discloses a basic affirmation of the other which endures the vagaries of human finitude with acceptance and forgiveness. The freedom to be faithful must presuppose that disclosure. Apart from that basic affirmation, the givenness of human frailty — the possibility, if not the probability, of faithfully intended acts to go astray, to destroy irreversibly as well as create — would impose too great a risk even to act at all.⁷ The covenant partners would suffer a paralysis that would render them unable to love or to undertake actions on behalf of one another. They would become imprisoned by the unpredictable consequence of a single irreversible deed, to be set free only through the expression of forgiveness. Apart from the affirming knowledge of the other, the covenant partner could never recover from that single deed gone astray.

Applying the marital imagery to the relationship of YHWH and Israel, certain implications become evident. The right relationship between YHWH and Israel reflects the love and trust which appear in the bond of marriage. As in the relationship between husband and wife, love and trust issue in a knowledge which is intimate and involved.⁸ For Hosea, this knowledge assumes a normative position in his prophecy. The "knowledge of God" is the basic formula for the relationship which Israel ought to have to God under the covenant. As the marriage partners act to preserve the precious revelation of the other, so must Israel care for and keep YHWH's revelation of Himself, His *torah*, that is entrusted to their keeping. As trusting intimacy sustains and encourages faithfulness, so the knowledge of God supports and elicits the keeping of the *torah*. Knowledge and obedience are inseparable, even as trust, intimacy, and faithfulness cannot be severed in the marital bond. Accordingly, the betrayal of

lated one, can confirm the decision and accept it in such a way that fulfills the return or brings the decision to a moment of completion in the restoration of relationship.

7. I am dependent here on Hannah Arendt's profound discussion of action in *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), esp. pp. 233-38.

8. Walter Harrelson writes of this knowledge that "it is not a knowledge of sacral traditions only, but intimate communion." To know God "results in one being struck down and at the same time exalted." "Knowledge of God in the Church," *Interpretation* 30 (1976):14. Note also W. Eichrodt, "The Holy One in Your Midst," *Interpretation* 15 (1961):264.

trust implies more than the prerogative of the violated one. It calls into question not so much the acceptance or rejection of the violator's turning, as the ability of that person to turn at all. Only through the bondage of relationship can human beings approach the knowledge which frees them to act faithfully. In her apostasy, Israel destroys not only the bonds of meaningful relationship but the freedom which makes possible a faithful return. Thus, Israel is incarcerated by her own deeds, unable to return to God. Short of an intervening miracle, her plight is hopeless; the corruption in her midst, irreparable. The miracle that addresses this predicament must be the action of the violated other which makes possible and summons forth the decision, the turning. Decision, where it exists at all, must be interpreted as a response. Apart from this an imprisoned Israel remains powerless to resist the appeal of the spirit of harlotry, the enticement of the fertility cult.⁹ Unable to abandon her life of whoredom, she continually abandons YHWH. Knowledge of God, of the freedom called forth and the future created by the other, is not possible; only the self-bondage to a miserable past, to a knowledge of one's own deeds which forever enshroud the human frame with guilt and condemnation.

III

Something in you has been setting me up for a murder. Do you see it?
But now I'm going away; so you're not my victim anymore. It's just you, and
your hand . . .

Arthur Miller, *After the Fall*

I will return again to my place,
until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face,
and in their distress they seek Me.

Hosea 5:15

Although imprisonment to one's deeds inevitably yields pervasive guilt and condemnation, the awareness of that bondage occurs only in the rare moments when "weeping is reality,"¹⁰ when only despair can affirm the preciousness of the other from whom one is estranged. The trauma and horror of that awareness summon forth, if they do not necessitate, means of numbing oneself or veiling that terrifying reality.

Israel's participation in the fertility cult, a "narcotic of deception,"¹¹ obscures the reality and consequence of her apostasy. Anaesthetized by her own apostate activity, Israel is numb to her guilt, oblivious to the freight of her deeds. Again, the nature of Israel's harlotrous deeds pre-

9. On the strong appeal of the fertility cult to Hosea's Israel, see Ward, p. 28 and Eichrodt, p. 266.

10. The phrase is suggested by Walter Harrelson in a sermon, "Weeping and Rejoicing," delivered at Vanderbilt University, April 14, 1976. Harrelson suggests that genuine weeping constitutes an authentic act by which one confronts the reality of one's self, neighbor, and world.

11. Thus, Hans Walter Wolff, *Hosea* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), p. 99.

cludes the possibility of return, for return presupposes the double-edged awareness of guilt and estrangement (apart from which the question of return would never arise) and affirmation of the preciousness of the estranged other (apart from which return fails to be desirable).

In the midst of Israel's anaesthetized apostasy, Hosea proclaims YHWH's wrathful punishment (5:10-14) and announces His (YHWH's) withdrawal from the midst of Israel (5:15). YHWH will "return to His place." Israel's existence will be circumscribed by the absence of God: no longer will He be with Israel, to hear, to answer, to save. As YHWH's going forth from His place marked His partisanship on behalf of a threatened Israel, so the retreat to that place signals His abandonment of Israel to the perils of history. Left alone, Israel becomes trapped in the continual events of war until devastation fully runs its course.¹²

However, God's withdrawal is qualified by a temporal limitation: "I will return again to my place, until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face, and in their distress they seek me" (5:15). Accordingly, the absence of God "will be ended by an event in the soul of Israel when in the fire of their agony the people seek YHWH and look to him . . . YHWH's action is no longer the visitation of his wrath to destroy, but a strategy to bring his people back to him."¹³

Cultically addicted and imprisoned by her deeds, Israel is powerless to return to God. In this context, YHWH's withdrawal constitutes a radical attempt to penetrate the clouds of cultic anaesthesia which encompass the people, to effect through absence and destruction what His saving presence and unwearying faithfulness had been unable to accomplish. Numbness will be shattered by pain; drugged insensitivity will yield to rotteness and decay (5:12); addiction will come to cease in the isolation and depravity of the desert (3:5). In her blindness and numbness Israel fails to perceive the preciousness of YHWH, that He alone sustains her life (2:8). However, in the days of His withdrawal, the impotence of the fertility gods to sustain life will be apparent, and survival will depend on the acknowledgement of YHWH's power. That acknowledgement is integrally related to the admission of guilt, for it continually calls into question the adequacy of all human activity. Imperiled and afflicted, Israel must seek the face of God.

The radical action of YHWH is freighted with great risk. He must imperil the precious life of Israel so that He might be sought. In doing so He risks ultimately the reoccurrence of His rejection and, in a real sense, places Himself and the duration of His exile into the hands of Israel. Yet for Israel the danger is also great: Can YHWH's withdrawal truly be qualified by their seeking Him, or in the darkness of His absence have they lost

12. The historical context, here the time of Tiglath-pileser's attack bringing about the end of the Syro-Ephraimite war, leaves little doubt as to Israel's fate when left alone in history.

13. Mays, pp. 92-93.

the way to “His place”? Can the God who abandons them to the ravages of history be trusted to sustain their life? Threatening annihilation, does the scorned lover will life or death for Israel? But the risks must be taken if the estrangement is to be overcome. Israel must endure a nightmare to awaken from the sleeping death-in-life of her cultic addiction. To end the night of horror Israel seeks the face of God. In desperation one seeks survival, yet this, in itself, is other than steadfast love. YHWH acts radically, even scandalously, to fulfill His purpose, but love cannot be coerced. Thus, the nightmare which is YHWH’s continues.

IV

“I was going to kill myself just now. Or don’t you believe that either?”
 “I saved you twice, why shouldn’t I believe it?”

Arthur Miller, *After the Fall*

After two days He will revive us;
 on the third day He will raise us up.

Hosea 6:2

In the text, YHWH’s withdrawal is followed by a liturgy of penitence — a double call to return to YHWH — and confident expression of YHWH’s deliverance:

Come, let us return to YHWH;
 for He has torn, that He may heal us;
 He has stricken, and He will bind us up.

After two days He will revive us;
 on the third day He will raise us up,
 that we may live before Him.

Let us know, let us press on to know YHWH;
 His going forth is sure as the dawn;
 He will come to us as the showers,
 as the spring rains that water the earth (6:1-3).

Such liturgical “songs” were not uncommon in times of crisis as the community gathered to fast, lament, petition, and sacrifice to avert the wrath of God. Here, context and language suggest that the liturgy is the response for which YHWH waits in withdrawal (5:15). It acknowledges the need to return and to know YHWH (6:1 and 6:3), as called for by the prophet, and recognizes YHWH’s punishing hand in the suffering of the people. Thus, at first glance, the penitential liturgy would seem a satisfactory, if not an ideal, response to YHWH’s radical action. Yet, the divine lament which follows (6:4-6) makes it clear that this cannot be the case. The liturgical response is hopelessly inadequate and seems to condemn itself by its own expression.

The summons to return rests in the confidence that the one who has torn and stricken will heal and bind up. Such confidence betrays Israel’s unawareness of the injury she has caused and trivializes the risk taken by the violated one in opening himself to the violator’s return. Whereas the

awareness of guilt affords a recognition that the restoration of relationship is undeserved, the confident expectation of healing and binding suggests the absence of such cognizance. Unlike the return freighted with the violator's pain of genuine repentance, this summons to return seemingly claims for Israel, in a rather automatic fashion, the healing of YHWH. Such a return by-passes the crucial step of "decision" and fails to reflect any sense of change wrought through judgment. The strategy of YHWH's afflicting withdrawal had failed. Imperilled, Israel responds, but only out of a self-centered concern for her survival, not for the pain of the other. Called upon as an automatic dispenser of healing and seemingly obligated to heal because of his "tearing and striking," the existence of the forsaken YHWH goes unrecognized, for to recognize the scorned lover requires those who have abandoned him to perceive the treachery of their deeds and to return with trembling, not confidence.

As the passage continues, so does the arrogant confidence of Israel: not only will YHWH "heal and bind up" but it is assumed that He will do so quickly. "After two days" and "on the third day" synonymously express the short period of time in which YHWH will act to preserve Israel's life and raise up the wounded ones. An expression of purpose (6:2c) follows this assertion of confidence: YHWH will save that the people might live before Him. As one commentator has expressed the matter:

According to the Old Testament view, should the people die, they would be separated from YHWH, absent from his presence, incapable of worshipping him and of satisfying him with their praise . . . YHWH would have no people to live before him as his peculiar possession. The song arrogantly assumes that YHWH's purpose is fulfilled in their mere existence.¹⁴

In the second summons (6:3) the characteristic arrogance and confidence of the liturgy is apparent, along with the related influence of the Canaanite religion. The availability of God to the people's "knowledge" is expressed through simile, stressing the likeness of YHWH's "going forth" to the repetitious and certain events of nature: the daily return of morning's dawn and the seasonal showers and rains that "water the earth." Through the use of such natural similes, as in the brash confidence, Israel fails to recognize the God who has risked His rejection to become involved in their history. Masquerading YHWH in the garments of fertility religion, Israel cloaks the one who is precious and distinct. Even upon the Israel wounded by YHWH's withdrawal, the "spirit of harlotry" continues to impose an addiction and slavery in which YHWH can be seen only as another lover to be taken for granted and manipulated through the cult. The irony is severe, if not tragic. Israel's very songs of penitence testify not to her desire to return, but to her continuing harlotry. Israel has become imprisoned by her deeds in such a way that her very attempts to survive or to speak any words at all are tainted with the spirit of harlotry. Afflicted

14. Mays, p. 95.

and imperilled, Israel “seeks the face of YHWH” but her addiction has left her blind and has ravaged her memory. Where all faces are but a blur of Baal, the reality of God has been eclipsed. No longer can Israel perceive the countenance of YHWH nor, indeed, recognize her own face.

V

And what's the cure? . . . No, not love; I loved them all, all! And gave them willing to failure and to death that I might live, as they gave me and gave each other, with a word, a look, a trick, a truth, a lie — and all in love!

Arthur Miller, *After the Fall*

What shall I do with you, O Ephraim?
What shall I do with you, O Judah?
Your love is like a morning cloud,
Like the passing morning dew.¹⁵

Hosea 6:4

YHWH's response to the liturgy of his people reveals His inner struggle and turmoil over His inability to move Israel to faithfulness. The quandary of God — “What shall I do with you, O Ephraim? What shall I do with you, O Judah?” — and the faithless inconstancy of Israel, challenge the very possibility for covenant life. Israel's devotion, at best, is fleeting, and neither YHWH's saving acts nor perilous afflictions are sufficient to guarantee the constancy of Israel's response to Him. The experience of YHWH's steadfast love fails to bring Israel to love steadfastly in return.

Imperilled by YHWH's withdrawal, Israel does seek His face, even confidently boasting of His power to heal and save. But their shallow seeking fails to partake of the depth which perceives, in a glimpse, the agony of the violated God and the guilt of the community. Thus, their devotion expresses merely form without reality and power and vanishes as the threat to their existence disappears. Their ephemeral love flees “like a morning cloud, like the passing morning dew.”¹⁶

Inconstancy must be seen as something other than evil intent and malicious acts. It is not sin, but, rather, reflects “the sin which stands behind sin” — a wrong condition of human nature and a perversion of the human will which frustrates and misdirects even well-intentioned acts.¹⁷ It is not sufficient to say that Israel's seeking the face of YHWH is insincere. With survival threatened, the people may be very sincere indeed.

15. In translating this verse I have followed the suggestion of R. Gordis, *Poets, Prophets, and Sages* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971), p. 151. Note also Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Hosea* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1980), p. 428.

16. The irony here should be stressed. Israel characterized YHWH's going forth as certain as the dawn and the fixed seasons of rain. However, borrowing from their own imagery, YHWH characterizes Israel's love as fleeting as the vaporous moisture of morning mist and dew, which seems to appear only to vanish. Note, Mays, p. 97.

17. Thus, Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1967), p. 387.

The point is, instead, that the prevailing spirit of harlotry taints even Israel's attempts to seek YHWH so that their very existence is whorish. The identity of the whore is not Evil, but Frailty. Harlotrous acts are but symptomatic of the conditions of life itself, which always imperil the constancy of our deeds with the irreversibility of action — "of being unable to undo what one has done though one did not, and could not have known what he was doing"¹⁸ — and its unpredictability, even as the finality and uncertainty of death imperil life. The quandary of God is that neither the constancy of His steadfast love, nor the acts of affliction which judge the life of Israel, can alter the conditions in which she must respond to Him. To do so would be to deny life, and thus, also, the possibility of the love upon which He awaits.

VI

In whose name? In whose blood-covered name do you look into a face you loved, and say, Now you have been found wanting, and now in your extremity you die!

Arthur Miller, *After the Fall*

Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets,
I have slain them by the words of my mouth,
and my judgment goes forth as the light.

Hosea 6:5

Expressed in 6:5 is YHWH's awareness that the problem of inconsistency is not new in Israel's history and neither is His active opposition to it.¹⁹ This fleeting character of Israel's devotion is but a case in point of the long-standing predicament that had occasioned YHWH to address His people through the angry, slaying words of His prophets. Accordingly, the apostate Israel stands in double jeopardy, punished by her deeds (5:4) and for her deeds (6:5); afflicted by the silence of God (His withdrawal, 5:15) and slain by the speech of God (prophecy, 6:5). It is God's judgment, not His aid, which "breaks forth like light."²⁰ What is certain is YHWH's opposition to any action which perverts the order set forth to determine the right relationship between God and His people. Yet because the relationship willed by YHWH is continually perverted, each generation must be slain by its prophets, even as it is infected by the plague of its own disease.²¹

18. Arendt, p. 237.

19. The difficulty of this verse and the controversy over its meaning is well attested in the commentary literature. See, e.g., Wolff, pp. 119-20 and Andersen and Freedman, pp. 428-29.

20. Recalling the description in 6:3 of YHWH's aid being "sure as the dawn," irony again becomes apparent. The "light" imagery takes on an opposing nuance in 6:5. Judgment, not assistance, is certain.

21. A poignant parallel to this verse is expressed by Albert Camus in the closing paragraphs of *The Plague*. The sickness motif in 5:12 renders the parallel all the more striking, for the one who slays by his prophets is like a disease to his people. Camus writes, "None the less, he

VII

Do the hardest thing of all — see your own hatred and live.

Arthur Miller, *After the Fall*

For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice,
the knowledge of God, rather than burnt offerings.

Hosea 6:6

As YHWH slays by the prophets He engages both in affirmation and negation. Affirmed is the order of relationship uncompromisingly demanded by YHWH of Israel. Negated is any form of relationship which compromises that order. Lest confusion prevail, YHWH declares what must be the case and what cannot be the case: “For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God, rather than burnt offerings.”

The demand of YHWH is *hesed* — steadfast love, loyalty, devotion, that which preserves and constitutes the faithful covenantal relationship — and *daath elohim* — that knowledge which is characterized by the experience of the continual efficacy of God, and communion with Him in trust and obedience.²² Of this demand J.L. Mays has written:

Devotion is opposed to the sacrifice in which the worshippers participate by sharing a meal to establish community with the deity. Knowledge of God is opposed to the burnt offering in which the whole animal is consumed as an act of adoration to the deity.²³

However, the contrast might be expressed another way. The mode of relationship exercised in such ritual meals and sacrifices is basically that of an “I” to an “it.”²⁴ Detachment, distance, and manipulation all characterize the “I-It” relation and all are operative in the ritual life of the cult. By contrast, “steadfast love” and “knowledge of God” suggest the relationship of an “I” to a “Thou,” a relationship that is intimate and self-involving, trusting otherness and risking nearness. As suggested earlier, participation in the cult functioned as a “narcotic of deception” for Israel. Similarly, relating to God in the detached way of an “I” to an “it” deceives. Ultimately, the “I-it” relationship creates flight from the reality of oneself,

knew that the tale he had to tell could not be one of a final victory. It could be only the record of what had had to be done, and what assuredly would have to be done again in the never ending fight against terror and its relentless onslaughts. . . . And, indeed, as he listened to the cries of joy rising from the town, Rieux remembered that such joy is always imperilled. He knew what those jubilant crowds did not know but could have learned from books: that the plague bacillus never dies or disappears for good; that it can lie dormant for years and years in furniture and linen-chests; that it bides its time in bedrooms, cellars, trunks, and bookshelves; and that perhaps the day would come when, for the bane and the enlightenment of men, it would rouse up its rats again and send them forth to die in a happy city.” (New York: The Modern Library, 1948), p. 278.

22. Thus, Wolff, p. 120.

23. Mays, p. 98.

24. Here and throughout this paragraph I am dependent upon, and intend the understanding of “I-it” and “I-Thou” relationships as put forth by Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, tr. W. Kaufmann (New York: Scribners, 1970).

as well as the reality of the other. Ritual acts cannot overcome the estrangement between Israel and God, nor constitute the relationship between them. Neither can they conquer the source of her guilt in times of distress, though they may subdue it. The deception is that by engaging in such cultic deeds one pretends that the demands of relationship can be fulfilled ritually at a safe distance, that sacrifice brings together that which is apart, that burnt offering atones for apostasy and enables guilt to be forgotten, that the one who is eternally "Thou" is "it." The demands of YHWH — steadfast love and knowledge of God — are those demands of the "I-Thou" relationship: knowing the other and being known as precious and trustworthy; revealing oneself and treasuring the revelation of the other. The demand requires Israel to turn to YHWH, yet it is a demand forever in tension with Israel's imprisonment to her own deeds.

VIII

Is the knowing all? To know, and even happily, that we meet unblest; not in some garden of wax fruit and painted trees, that lie of Eden, but after, after, the Fall, after many, many, deaths. Is the knowing all? And the wish to kill is never killed, but with some gift of courage one may look into its face when it appears, and with a stroke of love — as to an idiot in the house — forgive it; again and again . . . forever?

Arthur Miller, *After the Fall*

I will not execute my fierce anger,
I will not again destroy Ephraim;
for I am God and not human,
the Holy One in your midst,
and I do not want to destroy.²⁵

Hosea 11:9

Trapped between perpetual inconstancy and the demand for steadfast love, what is the destiny of Israel? Withdrawn to His place to await the turning of Israel, what is the destiny of YHWH? The two questions cannot be answered independently, for YHWH's absence portends the destruction of Israel; Israel's harlotry, the exile of God. Yet, Hosea suggests that there exists a future other than exile and destruction, for the God who withdraws is also the Holy One in the midst of Israel.

The holiness of God is manifest in His decision to be life-giving for Israel and to dwell in her midst. To understand this action, we must return to the marital analogy once more, for holiness is reflected in, and assumes new meaning through, the restoration of the marriage between the harlot and the forsaken husband. Here the reconstitution of the marriage covenant depends upon the act of the forsaken husband as he refuses to remain separate from the scandal of the harlot. Aware that her constancy cannot be guaranteed, he still acts in such a way as to share that

25. The translation of this verse is highly controverted. Here I have rendered it in terms of the roots ²bh (on the basis of the form in Proverbs 1:10) and b^cr as suggested by R. Gordis in a private communication.

scandal. In the covenant of marriage he takes that scandal upon himself, as if it were his own. He commits himself to dwell, not apart from, but in the midst, of it.

In the relationship of YHWH and Israel it becomes apparent that YHWH, like the forsaken husband, refuses to stand apart from the harlotrous Israel. He will not withdraw but will remain in her midst. Through the covenant He weds Himself to the scandal of Israel's harlotry.

Thus, the holiness of God cannot be seen as that which avoids contact with stain or contamination, or separates from scandal. Such a view of YHWH's holiness would lead inevitably to His withdrawal and Israel's destruction. His actions suggest the contrary. Rather than remaining over-against Israel, He moves to stand with her, to share in her predicament. The ultimate concern expressed in YHWH's action is not for the "purity" of God, but for the life of the other. YHWH does not remain separate in His holiness, because to do so would destroy Israel. Instead, He weds His holiness to the scandalous harlotry of Israel in order that she might live. And this constitutes holiness: the refusal to stand apart from the other or to let the concern for one's own righteousness become a source of estrangement.²⁶ To be motivated absolutely by concern for the other — this is what it means to be God, not human. The marriage between the harlot and the forsaken one can only be a "moment of a divine turning."²⁷ Holiness is the turning of God.

That turning must not be read to imply the end of YHWH's opposition to Israel's harlotry. Rather, it must be seen as the liberating act which affords and encourages the turning of His people. The consequences of her own deeds ever enslave Israel. Yet, the moment of God's turning remains a moment of forgiveness which empties the burden of actions past and initiates a new beginning that, at least momentarily, re-creates the other. Through such acts God reveals Himself to be known as one who can be trusted not to separate from Israel on account of her deeds, but rather as one who in His suffering shares the deeds of humanity in order to sustain life in new beginnings. Faithfulness — the making and keeping of promises — can be dared only through this knowledge of God. Steadfast love is nurtured not by the experience of His saving acts, nor His wrath, but by His turning. Constancy is forever encouraged by it. Still, faithfulness exists only rarely, if not miraculously, and inconstancy is expressed daily by the people of God. Thus, the history of Israel is marked not by its fulfillment but by its beginnings, which are continual, and which forever scar the countenance of God with forsakenness.

26. With great significance this constitutes a movement, a decision, of YHWH, for through the exercise of His wrath He has revealed Himself as one who is concerned for His own righteousness, and in the adversary context in Hosea (e.g., 4:1f.) He expresses concern for His own justification. Both find YHWH over-against, rather than standing-with, Israel in her predicament.

27. Martin Buber, *The Prophetic Faith* (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), p. 126.

Where is Jewish Culture to be Found?

TRUDE WEISS-ROSMARIN

JUDAISM, ACCORDING TO THE STATEMENT OF Sponsorship printed on the inside front cover of the magazine, "is dedicated to the creative discussion and exposition of the religious, moral and philosophical concepts of Judaism and their relevance to the problems of modern society."

The first thirty volumes of JUDAISM, whose completion was festively observed as "The Thirtieth Anniversary of JUDAISM," are proof that the quarterly journal realized these aims and, in addition to "discussion and exposition" also published original thought and ideas.

In view of just *this one* contribution, of *one* Jewish journal published in America, it seems strange that the symposium, which marked JUDAISM's birthday, asked whether Jewish culture in America is "possible?" In the inevitably limited sphere of a journal, JUDAISM and its thirty-odd contributing editors residing in America — in their own respective fields of Jewish scholarship — and, last but not least, Dr. Robert Gordis, the current editor, have evidenced in what surely adds up to a five-foot bookshelf (including these scholars' hundreds of papers printed in learned and general journals) that Jewish culture is not only "possible" but can prosper in America.

The two symposiasts, Harold Bloom, the literary historian and critic of English literature, who is professor of Humanities at Yale University, and Robert Alter, the literary historian and critic of Hebrew literature and the Hebrew Bible, addressed themselves not to the "religious, moral and philosophical concepts of Judaism," that is, the texts — classical and modern — which postulate, comment on, and build upon these concepts and ideas, but in the case of Professor Bloom concentrated "on prose fiction" (JUDAISM [Summer 1982]: 274). Professor Alter, who knows "what we ought to be doing is looking elsewhere than at poetry and fiction for signs of nascent Jewish culture in this country," referred us to the very limited-scope Jewish scholarship of the younger members of the Association for Jewish Studies and the first three issues of *Prooftexts* (Ibid., pp. 283 and 285).

Surely there is no need to argue in the pages of JUDAISM that Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud and Philip and Henry Roth do not exemplify Jewish culture in the holistic inclusiveness of the generally accepted defi-

TRUDE WEISS-ROSMARIN is editor of The Jewish Spectator.

nition. I would also argue that while these and other writers of “prose fiction” discussed by Professor Bloom are Jews and usually write about Jews, and do not deny their Jewishness, yet they want to be known, as Bellow expressed it, as “American writers” who are Jews. Bellow, who teaches English literature at Chicago University, knows that literature is classified by language, not by topic and characters. Both symposiasts emphasized the Jewishness of Franz Kafka. But is the “Kafkaesque” alienation, rootlessness and disorientation in society *really* paradigmatic of the Jewish condition *in general*? Certainly, Kafka’s concentration on split characters applied to much of *fin de siècle* European culture — and this is, of course, where, in the final analysis, psychoanalysis has its true roots. I am referring to Freud’s insight which perceived the psyche as the battlefield of unresolved contradictions erupting in neuroses of withdrawal, alienation and inability to function in our society — exemplified by Kafka.

I see the Jewish condition of the years of Freud’s and Kafka’s creativeness not in alienation and rootlessness — although there was surely a large number of disoriented Jews, even as there are today — but as the decades of Jewish national awakening — *Hibbat Zion*, the Odessa Hebrew Circle, presided over by Mendele, the *zayde*, and made famous by Bialik and Aḥad-Ha-am. The *fin de siècle* saw the First Zionist Congress (1897) and Herzl’s confident and, in a sense, prophetic entry into his diary: “At Basle I founded the Jewish State . . . in fifty years everybody will see this.”

I do not see at all why, as Professor Bloom writes, “A writer like Philip Roth can only resort to them (Freud and Kafka) when he seeks images of that (Jewish) culture.” Nor can I see that, as Bloom decides, “we do not yet have an American Jewish culture,” because “Freud and Kafka came late in German language Jewish culture . . . and American Jewish culture, alas, has not produced any Heine either.” After all has been said for Heine’s “Hebrew Melodies” and his many, usually negative observations on Jews and Judaism, which fill an entire volume (*Jüdisches Manifest*, ed. Hugo Bieber, second ed., [New York, 1946]), and Kafka’s discovery of Yiddish and Jewish concerns, thanks to his association with Dora Dymant during the last stage of his incurable tuberculosis, I am left wondering whether James Joyce’s Leopold Bloom in *Ulysses* is less “Jewish” — *Jewish* by Professor Bloom’s definition — than, say, Heine’s “Moses Lump?” The notion that only Jews can write about Jews is controverted by numerous notable works by non-Jews — fiction, poetry and such essays as Matthew Arnold’s “Culture and Anarchy” with its uniquely perceptive and incisive statements on Hebraism and Jews.

Professor Alter suggests — and with this he is on very sound Jewish ground — to consider “the published works” of Judaica scholars “as alternatives of original cultural expression” to the stories and novels he has discussed. Certainly, *Jüdisches Wissenschaft* is “more Jewish” than American Jewish prose fiction. However, Alter’s enthusiasm for the contributions of those who teach Judaica on the campus leads him to denigrate the schol-

ars who teach, and taught, in the Jewish seminaries. He also errs in stating that the Rabbinic Seminars scholars “with virtually no exceptions . . . were European born, usually also European-trained.” Alter seems to be unaware of the fact that Louis Finkelstein, Robert Gordis, Harry Orlinsky, H.L. Ginsberg — and *another* score of senior Rabbinic Seminary scholars were born in this country or Canada, and received their training in this country. I fail to see why Arthur Green’s *A Life of R. Nahman of Bratslav*, Jacob Neusner’s *Judaism: The Evidence of the Mishnah*, and I. Twersky’s *Introduction to the Code of Maimonides* have a closer “interplay” with “the larger American intellectual realm” than Gordis’ *Job*, Orlinsky’s *The Septuagint*, and Finkelstein’s *The Pharisees*, merely because the former group teach at universities and the latter group have been associated with seminaries.

When all has been said for the “new generation of American-born, American-trained Jewish scholars,” and they *are* both fulfillment and partial hope for “Jewish culture” in America, I think it will be quite a while until they will produce, say, the kind of new Hebrew Bible translation which has just been completed.

Perhaps it is ironic that when emphasizing that Green’s book on the Bratslaver could have been written only in America, Professor Alter refers us to Erik Erikson’s *Young Man Luther* as “the general American genre of biography.” Has he forgotten that Erikson was European-born and was trained at the Vienna Psychoanalytic Institute? And, of course, Erikson does not proclaim that his *Young Man Luther* (and his other books) are so *new* that they are not indebted to his teachers, especially “Dr. Paul Federn, a fascinating man.” While Professor Alter thinks that Green’s *Tormented Master* would not be what it is without the models of Erikson’s *Young Man Luther*, and “the general American genre of biography,” Erikson himself credits his European training.

The Jewish people is a world people, although the centers of Jewish gravity have been shifting from continent to continent and country to country. There has been *change* — otherwise Jews and Judaism could not have survived. But the *changes* worked and were wrought in the context — and — crucible of *tradition*, that is to say, in “the creative discussions and exposition of the religious, moral and philosophical concepts of Judaism.” It seems to me that Professor Alter’s and Professor Bloom’s concepts of Jewish culture are so threadbare because both ignore that which is “the essence” of Judaism.

Possibile Deus Homo?

DAVID S. SHAPIRO

I

THE ENGAGEMENT IN ECUMENICAL DIALOGUE

(in which this writer also is a participant) is not devoid of hazards, since it may encourage a tendency to blur differences, consciously or unconsciously, in the name of brotherhood and harmony. I think that Dr. Wyschogrod's view on the Incarnation, *viz.*, that in light of the Biblical localization of God the distance between the anthropomorphic God of the Bible and the God-become-man of Christianity is diminished, is evidence of such a tendency.¹

Dr. Wyschogrod, while affirming the Biblical conception of the gulf that separates man from God and that God is certainly not equal to man in any sense, nevertheless maintains that the possibility that God might assume human form is not *totally* removed from Biblical thinking. Judaism's repudiation of the belief that God can become man as an *a priori* impossibility is questioned by Dr. Wyschogrod, referring to the Biblical lack of preoccupation with what God can or cannot do, as well as "the fact that the God of the Bible is depicted in thoroughly human terms" and that He "is not totally dissimilar to a human being." However, before giving consideration to the problem of Biblical anthropomorphism, we ought to examine whether the assumption by God of human form is a Biblically tenable doctrine or whether it is at all reasonable. With due respect to Dr. Wyschogrod as a distinguished scholar and thinker as well as a man of deep devotion to his people and faith, I believe that he is totally in error on this subject.

In the 11th century, St. Anselm of Canterbury wrote a tract entitled: *Cur Deus Homo?*² The question that confronts us now is: *Possibile Deus Homo?*³ If God can become man, why can He not become animal? If He

1. See JUDAISM, Vol. 31, No. 3, pp. 361-365; cf. Dr. Gordis' comment on p. 262. In Dr. Gordis' paraphrase of Dr. Wyschogrod's position: "He (Dr. Wyschogrod) maintains that Judaism does not deny the possibility of an Incarnation. It merely does not believe that it happened in the case of Jesus." While in some of his statements Dr. Wyschogrod does maintain this position, in others he appears to be questioning it. There is some ambivalence in Dr. Wyschogrod's view on this subject.

2. Why did God become man?

3. Is it possible for God to become man?

becomes man, is He man in all respects? Does He perform all the activities and functions which characterize human existence, even those aspects which man has in common with animals? I believe that this view leads to an absurdity which the Jewish religion will not allow. If this incarnated deity does not perform human functions which are of a biological character then he is not truly human. But, in the Christian doctrine, God's human form goes through the tribulations of a human being, suffering even death. Interestingly, the Talmud states that man was created with functions similar to those of animals to prevent him from proclaiming himself a god. According to another version, death has been decreed for man to prevent the same claim on his part.⁴

Is God capable of dying? Can God commit suicide? Can He create another god? These are questions we should ask of those who maintain that God can do anything. Can He make a circle identical to a square? Can He make one equal two?⁵ Can God sin? Can He act unjustly? Can the Creator become a creature? Can the uncreated God become a created God? Such propositions are obviously contradictory and mutually exclusive. God cannot become non-God. He cannot die. He cannot create logical absurdities. God is the unlimited. He can, nevertheless, not act contrary to His nature as described in Biblical texts. Job notwithstanding, God can do no evil. With Him is power and with Him is lovingkindness.⁶ That God can become man with all human frailties is to maintain that God can become non-God. Even the New Testament nowhere makes such a claim.⁷ This doctrine is found mainly in pagan religions. It may also be found in higher religions such as Hinduism, where the ultimate principle of the universe takes on various finite forms, even those of animals, all of which are manifestations of the Ultimate Being, Brahman,⁸ or in

DAVID S. SHAPIRO is rabbi of Congregation Anshe Sfard, Milwaukee, Wis.

4. *Bava Batra* 74a-b. Cf. the remarkably similar quotation from Nietzsche "that man's abdomen might well dissuade him from proclaiming himself a god" (cited in Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, Vol. II, p. 91, note 2. See also *Ex. Rabbah*, IX, 7, on Pharaoh's pretense of his divinity, by denying his need for basic physiological functions.

5. Cf. Maimonides, *Guide*, I, 75, the Fifth Method; II, 13. While the Bible is not a textbook of metaphysics, and one may maintain that the medieval philosophers are not representative of Biblical thought (cf. Wyschogrod's statement, *Op. cit.*, p. 362), I believe that it is wrong to assert that the Scriptures are devoid of metaphysical presuppositions (see my *Studies in Jewish Thought*, Vol. I, pp. 147ff.). It is true that the Bible speaks of what God can do and not of what He cannot do. But the vehemence and unparalleled zeal with which the Jewish people has historically fought against these doctrines — the Incarnation and the Trinity — as contrary to reason and contrary to Biblical teachings, testifies to the Jewish understanding of the Bible, which refuses to accept absurdities as consonant with Biblical thought. Dr. Wyschogrod is very much aware of this, as is evidenced by his statement, "the assertion that a human being was God cannot but arouse the deepest anxiety in the Jewish soul" (*Op. cit.*, p. 364). The term "anxiety" is, I believe, not strong enough. For the Jew this possibility is inconceivable.

6. Cf. Job 12:13, 16 and Ps. 130:7.

7. Cf. Hans Küng, *Does God Exist?* (New York: Vantage Books, 1980), p. 685: "Neither is there any mention anywhere in the New Testament of the incarnation of God himself."

Spinozism, where all forms of being are modes of Substance — *Deus sive Natura*.⁹ But in these systems, except for paganism, all forms of reality, not just one person or entity, are modes of all-comprehensive Being. I believe that it is correct to assume that on the above grounds Judaism must reject the possibility of Incarnation *a priori*. The impossibility of Divine Incarnation has nowhere been more closely expressed than in the words of the renowned Christian theologian Paul Tillich:

[T]he assertion that “God has become man” is not a paradoxical but a non-sensical statement. It is a combination of words which make sense only if it is not meant to mean what the words say. “God” points to ultimate reality and even the most consistent Scotist had to admit that the only thing God cannot do is to cease to be God. But that is just what the assertion that “God has become man” means.¹⁰

Idolatry as such, even representing the One God, is repudiated by Scripture. God cannot become, or be represented by, a sculptured image any more than He can become, or be represented by, a fish or a mouse. God can not be imprisoned in an artifact. Because of these considerations there can be no compromising with idolatry. The prohibition against idolatry can under no condition be abrogated, even for a moment, even by a prophet. God can never become embodied in an idol. A host of miracles cannot verify that God has become incarnate in a graven image or in a human being.¹¹ The Bible regards idolatry not only as a sin, but as an intellectual aberration. It is the product of ignorance and stupidity, an absurdity. The absurd cannot occupy a place in Jewish religious teaching.¹²

Of course, the Bible affirms that God can do whatever He pleases in heaven and earth. But He can do only that in which He takes pleasure. In what does He take pleasure? Jeremiah answers: that God performs lovingkindness, justice and righteousness in the earth, for in these things He takes pleasure.¹³ He is not pleased by wickedness. Evil cannot dwell

8. E.g., *Bhagavad Gita*, Chaps. VII-XI.

9. *Ethics*, I, 23.

10. *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1957), Vol. II, p. 94.

11. Deut. 13:3-6; *Sanhedrin* 90a; Maimonides, *Yesodei Ha-Torah*, IX, 5. In his introduction to the *Mishnah* commentary (ed. Kapach, [Jerusalem, 5734], Vol. I, pp. 3-4), Maimonides explains that the prohibition against idolatry is based on reason and, therefore, it cannot be nullified by miracles. In *Yesodei Ha-Torah* he presents another reason, *q.v.* Cf. also his *Epistle to Yemen* (ed. Halkin, [New York: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1952], pp. 52 ff.). The categorical prohibition to practice idolatry even when summoned to it by a prophet who performs miracles to verify his summons, if it does not imply that God *cannot* become embodied in a corporeal or material form, at least assumes that God will never determine to take on such form.

12. Isa. 27:9-11 (cf. 1:3) and 44:9-20; Jer. 10:8; see also Deut. 32:6, 15 and 4:28; Hab. 2:18-19; Ps. 115:4-7. On the rejection of the absurd, see *Kuzari*, I, 67, 89; *Guide*, II, 25.

13. Ps. 135:6; also Gen. 18:14; Nu. 11:23; Jer. 32:26. Ps. 135:6 does not imply that God can transform Himself into any form that He chooses. It only states that He can perform in heaven and earth that in which He finds delight, namely, the execution of the attributes described in Jer. 9:23-24.

with Him.¹⁴ He cannot become a human being for the very reason that He cannot become Satan. God cannot become non-God. God can limit His power, He can perhaps even limit His knowledge,¹⁵ but He cannot transform His being into what it is not.

Christianity itself has, to a certain extent, been aware of this problem, and has, therefore, not maintained that God the Father Himself had assumed human form. It has devised a triune deity, only one of whose persons assumed human form, while God the Father retained His divine status. However, the very doctrine of the Trinity as applied to the Deity remains for Judaism an irreconcilable absurdity. It should be noted that distinguished Christian theologians have reinterpreted the Incarnation and the Trinity in an entirely novel way, which constitutes a complete rejection of its orthodox understanding.¹⁶

II

Now as to Biblical anthropomorphism. Even if we were to assume that the Biblical God is anthropomorphic, we still could not accept the Incarnation as possible in the light of historic Judaism. Judaism in its later development has certainly rejected all forms of anthropomorphism and has declared the repudiation of anthropomorphism a major principle of faith. As such, it has been incorporated in the Daily Prayer Book.¹⁷

Nevertheless, the evidence for Biblical anthropomorphism has to be looked at carefully. Some of it is derived from the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation. The Christian interpretation of Genesis 18, that one of the angels was God Himself in human (or angelic) form, never occurred to any Jewish interpreter. That God walked in the cool of day in Paradise is a misinterpretation of the Biblical text. If this were what the Biblical text means, it can no more be taken literally than the statement that God will walk in the midst of Israel or that He walks in the midst of Israel's camp or that He walks before the hosts of Israel.¹⁸ However, the text speaks of the *voice* of God moving about through the wind blowing in the garden (not

14. Ps. 5:5. Cf. also Gen. 18:25; Job 8:3 and 34:10. That God might act unjustly is, for Abraham, as well as for Elihu, a desecration of God's name (*halilah*). Cf. Deut. 24:16 and 32:4. See also Lev. 20:23; Deut. 12:31; Ps. 92:16; 146:7-9 *et passim*. The attitudes and attributes described in these and other Biblical passages (cf. Ex. 34:6-7) are not arbitrary in character or the product of Divine choice. They emanate from the very depths of the Divine nature. God's perfection, out of which His goodness and justice flow, transcends the realm of choice. The problem of evil is, of course, not to be dismissed, but this constitutes a subject in and of itself.

15. See Deut. 31:17; 32:20 *et passim*. Cf. also Gen. 8:1; 22:12 *et al.* Thereby, the problem of man's freedom may be solved.

16. See Tillich, *Op. cit.*, pp. 91 ff.; Küng, *Op. cit.*, pp. 685 ff.

17. Maimonides, Commentary to Mishnah, *Sanhedrin*, X, 1; *Teshuvah*, III, 7. The anti-Maimonists, contrary to popular opinion, were not anthropomorphists. See Ze'ev Jawitz, *Toledot Yisrael*, XII, pp. 175-186; R.M. Kasher, *Torah Sheleimah*, XVI, pp. 228 ff.

18. Lev. 26:12; Deut. 23:15 and 20:4. See also II Sam. 7:6-7.

the cool of the day).¹⁹ His outstretched arm and strong hand are obviously figures of speech.²⁰

The Bible itself insists that Israel saw no image or similitude at the time of the Revelation at Sinai. Only a *voice* was heard, but no image was seen except the fire on the mountain, representing the presence of God. Moses hears a *voice* speaking to him.²¹ God does not dwell in the Sanctuary in the wilderness or in Jerusalem. He dwells in the midst of His people.²² The heavens and the heavens of the heavens do not contain Him, much less an earthly abode.²³ His glory fills the earth. He fills heaven and earth. The heavens are His throne and the earth is His footstool.²⁴ God does not dwell in the Temple; it is His *name* that dwells there. Man's prayers rise to heaven by way of the Temple.²⁵ God is not flesh. He does not see with the eyes of flesh. *Basar* (flesh) is the Hebrew term for all living creatures. God alone is not *basar*.²⁶ He is actually even beyond spirit, but the source of "the spirits of all flesh."²⁷ God's thoughts are not man's thoughts nor are His ways man's ways.²⁸

That the Scriptures are rich in symbolic language should be clear to every student. No poetic, or even prosaic, work is devoid of symbolic usages. God's *hands* are His power. His *eyes* are His Providence. The *heart* of God stands for His concern. His *feet* for actions performed by Him in sequence. He *rides* on a cherub or cloud when He is prepared to exact swift retribution, or hurries to save. He *rests* when His purpose is achieved. His *feet make a stand* whenever His actions lead to their destination in a specific location. When God acts as judge or affirms the majesty of His royal state, He is represented as *sitting on a throne*. He *ris*es when He reproves His peo-

19. See *Gen. Rabbah*, XIX, 12, 13; Ibn Ezra, *ad locum*; Maimonides, *Guide*, I, 24. Cf. also Gen. 3:10. In the entire episode there is no reference to any sighting of God. He is only heard, as in Nu. 7:89 and Deut. 4:12. Cf. Benno Jacob, *Genesis*, p. 108 and Ehrlich, *Mikra Ki-Feshuto*, I, p. 10.

20. Deut. 7:19 and 34:12. Cf. Isa. 8:11; Ex. 6:1. On latter verse, see RShbM and S.D. Luzzatto.

21. Deut. 4:12, 15 ff.; 5:22 and 18:16; Nu. 7:89. On the fire, see Ex. 24:16-17.

22. Ex. 25:8 and 29:45-46; Nu. 35:34. True, there are some later passages which speak of God dwelling in Zion or Jerusalem (Joel 4:17, 21; Isa. 8:18; Ps. 135:21). Zion could refer to the dwellers in Zion, or the phrase may refer to God's name (JHWH) dwelling in Zion, as below note 25. Cf. Zech. 2:14-15.

23. I Kings 8:37. This statement is preceded by the paradoxical declaration that the Temple is "a place for God's dwelling" (I Kings 8:12-13; cf. Ex. 15:17). The term for *dwelling* (*shevet*) should very likely be understood as "throne," as in Amos 6:3 and II Sam. 23:8. The judgments of God issue forth from the Temple. Hence the Temple is described as His throne or judgment seat. Cf. Deut. 17:8-13; Isa. 2:1-4. On the symbolic character of "dwelling" see Ps. 22:4.

24. Isa. 6:3 (cf. Nu. 14:21; Ps. 72:19); Jer. 23:24 (cf. Ps. 139:7, 10; Amos 9:2-4); Isa. 66:1.

25. Deut. 12:5, 11; 16:2; I Sam. 6:2; I Kings 8:16-17; Jer. 7:10; I Kings 8:30, 39.

26. Gen. 6:17; Isa. 31:3; Cf. Gen. 6:3.

27. Nu. 16:22; 27:16. See also Isa. 57:16; Zech. 12:1. God operates through His *ruah*, as in Gen. 1:2, but He is beyond *ruah*. See also Job 10:4.

28. Isa. 55:8.

ple. He judges from *heaven*. He *comes down* to exact sentence, to deliver His message to Israel, or to bring deliverance to them.²⁹ All of these Divine activities are obviously couched in metaphorical style. Our sages long ago enunciated the principle that the Torah speaks in the language of finite man.³⁰ That God speaks to man or communicates with him is no evidence of anthropomorphism. God, Who gave man a tongue to speak, must have some way of communicating with him.

The appearance of God in Ezekiel is expressed in a circumlocutory way: the *appearance* of the *likeness* of the *glory* of God. It is not God Who appears in the form of man. The vision is that of the *likeness* of the *glory* of God.³¹ Moses does not see God; what he does see in prophetic vision is the similitude of God, referred to as *temunah*. At Sinai not even a *temunah* was envisioned.³² What the elders saw at Sinai was a foreshadowing of Ezekiel's vision of the Divine chariot.³³

Talmudic literature likewise affirms the omnipresence of God, certainly not in an anthropomorphic way. God fills the world as the soul fills the body. God is the place of the universe. The world is not His place.³⁴ Fantasy and imagination play an undeniable role in religious experience. These fantasies are symbolic and by no means do they represent objective reality.³⁵

III

Dr. Wyschogrod, in his paper, states that where the Bible criticizes idolatry this criticism does not extend to the human being who is worshipped as God. This is a very strange statement indeed. What about the 14th chapter of Isaiah where the Babylonian ruler is condemned for claiming to be a god? In Ezekiel, the king of Tyre is condemned for making a similar assertion. Joash, King of Judah, is punished for declaring himself a divinity. In the Book of Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar is condemned for mak-

29. On God's hand, see Ex. 14:31; Deut. 34:12; Nu. 21:26; Isa. 8:11; Ez. 1:3; *et passim*. On His *eyes*, see Deut. 11:12 and I Kings 9:3. On the *heart*, I Kings 9:3. For His *feet*, Na. 1:9; Hab. 3:5; Micah 1:3. For His *flight* and *riding*, Isa. 19:1; Ps. 18:11. For His *resting* (Gen. 2:2; Ex. 20:11. For His *stance*, Ex. 24:10; Zech. 14:4. See also Ps. 11:4-6 *et passim*; Gen. 11:7 and 18:21; Ex. 3:8 and 19:20. All of these passages are clearly figurative. Cf. Isa. 3:13.

30. *Berakhot* 31b *et passim*.

31. In Ezekiel, whatever he is envisioning in the celestial spheres is *demut* (likeness). See my *Orakhim* (Jerusalem, 1977), pp. 120-121.

32. Nu. 12:8; Deut. 4:12, 15 ff.; 5:22; 18:16. Cf. also Ps. 17:15. The *panim* which can be seen only from behind (Ex. 33:23) is not the face of God, but the *kavod* ("glory," verse 18) which manifests God's presence more intensely than the *kavod* of Ex. 24:16.

33. Cf. Ex. 24:10-11 and Ez. 1:26; 2:9.

34. *Berakhot* 10a. But God also dwells in the innermost recesses, in the nooks and crannies of the universe (*Gen. Rabbah* LXVIII, 10). On the Rabbinic view of anthropomorphism, see G. F. Moore, *Judaism*, I, pp. 419, 439; E. E. Urbach, *Hazal*, pp. 29 ff.; A. Marmorstein, *The Old Rabbinic Doctrine of God*, pp. 148 ff.

35. See Solomon Schechter, *Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology*, p. 30.

ing such grandiose claims.³⁶ Arrogance, as such, is condemned as idolatry and forgetfulness of God. How much more so is the claim of a human being to be God. The Talmud clearly includes the worship of a human being as idolatry.³⁷

"It is very difficult," Dr. Wyschogrod maintains, "for a Jew to accept a person who was a real material human being, as God." It is not merely "very difficult;" it is actually impossible and, as such, constitutes a rejection of the basic principle of Judaism. God may create entities that will represent His presence, but He can never be identified with these entities.

Incidentally, the mystery of the Divine limitation of the Lurianic Kabbalists and their followers (*Sod Ha-Zimzum*) refers to a self-limitation of God's power so as to make possible the creation of a finite world outside of God. This doctrine is by no means to be understood as a spatial withdrawal of the Unlimited (*En-Sof*). On the other hand, in order to avoid the misunderstanding of creation as a materialization or emanation of the Godhead, God is said to have removed Himself so as to make possible a created world. This obviously is not to be understood in spatial terms, since space itself was created by the *En-Sof*.³⁸

IV

That there were anthropomorphic trends in ancient Israel is quite evident from a number of passages in the Bible. The Biblical writers found it necessary to combat these anthropomorphic tendencies, fostered by the sophisticated cynics, known as *lezim* (scoffers). Thus, the emphasis is on God creating by His *word* (Gen. 1:4, etc.; Ps. 35:6, 9). Only after the clarification in the first chapter of Genesis that God's *command* brought creation into being does the second chapter allow itself the use of anthropomorphic language. That language could then be understood figuratively; so, likewise, the figurative language of the prophets (Isa. 48:13). While man is created in the likeness of God, God is paradoxically totally unlike man, only the wicked man thinks that God is like him (Ps. 50:20). God does not benefit from man's actions. Man's actions affect his fellow man not God (Job 22:2 ff.; 35:6, 8). Some anthropomorphists believed that God cannot see in the dark and, therefore, they performed their evil deeds in darkness (Isa. 29:15; Job 24:13, 17). Hence the emphasis on the absence of the distinction of light from darkness for God (Ps. 139:11-12). God is not man. He does not vent His anger once repentance takes place,

36. Isa. 14:12-14; Ez. 28:1-9; II Chr. 24:17; *Midrash Tanhuma*, *Va-Era*, 9; Dan. 5:19 ff. See also *Ibid.*, 6:8; 2:46 and *Sanhedrin* 93a.

37. Deut. 8:14; 32:15; *Sotah* 4b-5a-b; *Sanhedrin* 61a on Ex. 20:4: "Do not make yourself into an idol" (cf. notes of R. Samuel Strashun [*Rashash*] — to *Sanhedrin*, *Ibid.*). On Haman as a self-proclaimed deity see *Sanhedrin* 61b. On the refusal of Jews to engage in Roman Emperor worship, see Jos. *Antiquities*, VIII, 8; Philo, *Legatio ad Gaium*, XIII.

38. R. Chayim Vital, *Etz Chaim* (Jerusalem, 5695), p. 22; cf. M. Teitelbaum, *Ha-Rav Mi-Liadi* (Warsaw, 5673), Vol. II, pp. 37 ff.

unlike man who does not spare when he reaches a decision to destroy (Hos. 11:9). Some of the anthropomorphists maintained that God, similar to human beings, is subject to forgetfulness or is indifferent (Ps. 10:11). The answer of Job to God likewise seems to imply that God cannot be understood in human terms, because His purposes extend beyond any given moment into an unknown future (Job 38:4-7 ff.).

A Lost Heritage

DOREEN POLIANICH

Almost mine,
O religion of Moses,
I am from you
Two generations away,
The religion removed
By forced conversion —
Would you still live
in my soul today.

Pesach,
Rosh Hashanah,
Yom Kippur
Chanukah —
These holy days
Are lost to me,
And I have never
seen
The Shabbas lights —

O past whirling on beyond control —
So close to my touch, O passionate light!

DOREEN POLIANICH is a graduate of Queens College. Her poetry has already won a number of awards.

JOSEPHUS

The Jewish War

Gaalya Cornfeld,
General Editor, Tel Aviv

Paul L. Maier,
Consulting Editor, Western Michigan University,
Kalamazoo

Benjamin Mazar,
Consulting Editor, Hebrew University, Jerusalem

After two millennia, Flavius Josephus' *The Jewish War* remains the sole primary source for the history of the Second Temple, as well as a classic of Jewish-Hellenistic literature. He narrates Israel's struggle with verve, from Antiochus Epiphanes, to the Temple's destruction, and Masada's tragic heroism.

Josephus: The Jewish War presents this epic work in a new translation. Extensive annotations, with thirty-two color plates, and numerous photographs enrich the text, providing valuable archeological and historical data about the first century, C.E., Hellenistic world. The text follows the numbering of the Loeb Classic Edition. Maps, diagrams, and index complete this fine volume.

1982 / No. 10265 / 8½ x 11¼ / cloth / 560 p. / \$39.95*

Josephus: The Jewish War is available now at your bookstore, or by prepaid order from: Zondervan Publishing House, Dept. AB/RMS, 1415 Lake Drive, S.E., Grand Rapids, MI, 49506. Please include 10% for shipping. Residents of MI, CA, and IA, please add sales tax. Check/Money Order, VISA, and MasterCard acceptable.

*Suggested retail price — subject to change. Discounts available to qualified professors and libraries. Please inquire for more information.



ZONDERVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE

Looking at Religious Faith

Monotheism. By LENNE EVAN GOODMAN. Totowa, New Jersey. Allanheld, Osmun and Co., Inc. 1981. 228 pp. \$22.50.

Reviewed by JACOB B. AGUS

THIS THIN volume consists of three closely reasoned essays — “The Logic of Monotheism,” “The Existence of God,” and “Monotheism and Ethics.” The author pursues his inquiries on a high level of logical thought and with a remarkable mastery of the relevant literature. He writes as a philosopher, seeking truth wherever it may be found, though he arrives generally at positions upheld by historical Judaism.

Sponsored by the Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies, these three essays are the records of a quest for the meaning of religious faith, utilizing the insights of thinkers from diverse religious traditions and returning ever and anon to the positions hallowed in Judaism. The author is not apologetic, much less defensive; he writes as an independent philosopher of religion, whose conclusions happen to coincide with the principles of his own faith.

In the first essay, Goodman discusses the gradual emergence of monotheism out of the pagan world. People in animistic times have come to feel that certain events are especially revelatory of a mysterious presence — “divinity is that which is experienced or regarded as extraordinary . . . The concept of divinity from its inception is a value concept” (p. 2).

The impetus of growth in the dimensions of spiritual life is implicit in the experience of divinity itself. But the growth of the monotheistic ideal was frustrated

in the Greek world. The task of recognizing the oneness of the source of being and of value, while removing evil from the Supreme Being, was not carried out by the great philosophers of Greece. “This purgation, which we might projectively entitle the purgation of evil from divinity . . . proceeds gradually and piecemeal among the Greeks” (p. 9).

In the book of Genesis, the sting of divine terror is overcome. “The divine ‘displeasure’ is with (hamas) injustice” (p. 11). The command to sacrifice his son came to Abraham more or less as an echo of the piety prevailing in his world, but he used it as a means of refining and moralizing his concept of God. Abraham is rewarded for his perception of genuine religion. “The reward is not for blind obedience, but for the creative moral synthesis which sees that giving does not require slaying, but indeed excludes it” (p. 14).

Goodman argues for the Maimonidean concept of God, for all that it seems cold and lifeless to the unsophisticated. “These men who weep for the lost God of their childhood seem rather to be mourning childhood” (p. 23).

In the second essay, Goodman takes up the ontological proof for the existence of God. The concept of God is that of a perfect being; perfection includes existence; hence, God exists. Without disputing the circularity of this argument, Goodman insists that it makes sense if it is conjoined with religious experience. The existence of God is a “fiction,” in the sense of a hypothesis, which serves to heighten the meaning of life. “God is a fiction in the same sense that the Greek symbol *pi* is a fiction, or gravity, or causality” (p. 74).

In the third essay, Goodman

deals with the ethical dimension of divinity. The perfection of God's Being implies the obligation to strive toward ethical perfection. "If God exists, then we are bound, not logically but morally, to strive for all that is best in ourselves and best in others" (p. 79). A *mizvah* is "a demand for a recognition on the part of man of an obligation to seek fulfillment of the human aspiration toward perfection" (p. 81).

Throughout his discussion of general philosophy and specifically Jewish conceptions, Goodman maintains vigorously an openness to other faiths and points of view: "With reference to the particular

institutions of Jewish ritual, for example . . . they may be superior to some alternatives in virtue of the values to which they refer, to others, in virtue of the aptness of their stylistic mode, but there is no way in which they can be claimed *a priori* to be superior *per se* to their alternatives . . ."

Goodman is deeply religious, but no obscurantist. His book is a worthwhile addition to the treasury of modern Jewish thought.

JACOB B. AGUS is rabbi of Congregation Beth El, Baltimore, Md.

Anti-Semitism in Britain

Anti-Semitism in British Society, 1876-1939. By COLIN HOLMES. New York. Holmes & Meier Pubs., Inc., 1979. 250 pp. \$45.00.

Political Anti-Semitism in England, 1918-1939. By GISELA LEBZELTER. New York. Holmes & Meier Pubs., Inc., 1979. 222 pp. \$32.00.

Reviewed by WILLIAM FRANKEL

MY ONLY direct and personal experience of anti-Semitism during my years at the Jewish Chronicle was the explosion of a small bomb planted on the office steps, which produced the undignified spectacle of my ejection from the editorial chair. Like the police at the time, I presumed it was an expression of anti-Semitism although, the perpetrators never having been discovered, it remains a presumption. On the other hand, it is possible that it was merely an unusually violent protest from a disaffected reader.

However, professionally engaged as I was in a Jewish milieu, it

can plausibly be argued that it was unlikely that I would encounter prejudice to the same extent as Jews working in a non-Jewish environment. But for twelve years before my translation to the Jewish Chronicle, I had been practising at the Bar in London and on only one occasion had an anti-Semitic remark been made to me — and that was later the subject of an *amende honorable*.

This experience, as far as I can judge, is by no means unusual. Most Jews in Britain have rarely, if ever, encountered any manifestation of anti-Semitism directed against themselves. But the same people are acutely aware and apprehensive of anti-Semitism both because the Holocaust is so indelibly impressed on the Jewish historical consciousness and because of the ever-present intimations that Jews are not really loved. One of the characters in Galsworthy's novel *Loyalties* remarks (I quote from memory), "The trouble with the Jews is that they get on so." And in Britain today, they have certainly got on and very visibly so.

That kind of anti-Semitism

which is fuelled by envy of success and resentment of power and influence is in a different category from the subject of the two books under review. Both stop at the year 1939, the outbreak of World War II, which was a watershed in the history of anti-Semitism. The effect of that war on the Jewish people, the slaughter of almost half of its numbers and the subsequent emergence of the state of Israel, removed the cruder expressions of anti-Semitism as a point of view which could be openly espoused by responsible people.

It certainly was before 1939, and both of these books abound in references to major newspapers and other publications, to politicians of stature and to authoritative and respected publicists inveighing against the Jews. The war in Lebanon has recently made it rather easier and more socially acceptable to attack Jews as well as Israel, but still there is no real resemblance to the pre-1939 years. It is inconceivable that any general newspaper in Britain could print, as did the *Daily Express* in 1930, that all thinking people are aware that the present world depression is a direct result of Jewish intrigue, as they are also aware that the wave of moral laxity, the debasement of the decencies of life . . . are directly attributable to the same source.

The Lebzelter volume concentrates on political anti-Semitism between the two world wars while that by Colin Holmes examines its social manifestations since 1876. They also differ in style, the Holmes book being far more lucid and readable, while the other would have benefitted from the services of a skillful sub-editor. Both are considerably enhanced by comprehensive references, bibliographies and indices.

From the last quarter of the 19th century, anti-Semitism in Britain was fanned by the dark suspicions

and fears of the comparatively large numbers of East European Jews coming to a country where great wealth subsisted along with the direst poverty and squalor. The destitute Jews were alien in every sense — language, appearance, manners and religion — and the poor gentiles among whom they settled saw them as a threat to their own employment and as an invasion of their way of life. By the time Ms. Lebzelter's book opens, those fears had largely abated. The new arrivals had settled in, created new jobs, made disproportionate contributions to the life of the nation and were beginning to experience the material success which flowered after World War II. Anti-Semitism nevertheless survived but in the form of political activity, reaching its apogee with the Mosley Fascist movement in the thirties but, all the same, a disreputable fringe out of the mainstream of British politics and doomed to extinction in the war against Hitler.

Compared with other European countries, and possibly even the United States, Britain has a reasonably good record on anti-Semitism. It may be that its open espousal is just not "good form" or, to be more generous, it might be attributed to traditional British liberalism and tolerance. Yet the fact that even in so stable, mature and moderate a society, the ideology of anti-Semitism could attract some support, makes it an interesting object of study, a kind of case history within manageable limits. Both authors, in their different ways and within different parameters, have made valuable contributions to the understanding of the causes of anti-Semitism everywhere.

WILLIAM FRANKEL is former editor of the *Jewish Chronicle* and at present is a member of its Board of Directors.

Traditionalism is Here Again

Back to Basics. By BURTON PINES. New York. Wm. Morrow and Co., Inc., 1982. 348 pp., \$13.50.

Reviewed by MARSHALL J. BREGER

BACK TO BASICS is essential reading for concerned American Jews, not the least because its findings are alien corn for much of the established American Jewish community. In it Burton Pines reviews the political and cultural shift to the right confirmed by 1980's election results. While the political machinery of the New Right — Howard Phillip's Conservative Caucus, Paul Weyrich's Committee for a Free Congress, Terry Dolan's National Conservative Political Action Committee (NCPAC) — have been analyzed at length, the cultural and religious aspects of the traditionalist movement have been rarely essayed by the popular press.

Pines provides a *tour d'horizon* of conservative ferment reviewing local movements for a return to rigor in public school pedagogy, discussing campus evangelism for the capitalist system and describing efforts to focus the criminal justice system on victims' rights. Touching all aspects of new right activity, Pines relates the activities of neo-conservative intellectuals, conservative public interest law firms, and think tanks such as the American Enterprise Institute and the Heritage Foundation. His study of pro-family groups such as the Family Protection Project, the Eagle Forum and his description of religious traditionalism as exemplified by the media ministry and the Moral Majority, is especially valuable.

Though this exhaustive survey of conservative terrain is Pines' strength it also suggests *Back to Basics'* fundamental weakness — a focus on description in place of

analysis and a tendency to include disparate elements of Ronald Reagan's 1980 electoral constituency under a unitary "traditionalist" mantle. Indeed, Pines' use of the diffuse definitional rubric — traditionalist — rather than the standard terms "right-wing" or "conservative" suggests his optimistic inclusiveness. "Traditionalist," he argues, is a less political and ideological rubric conveying a peculiarly American faith

in conquering frontiers and building better societies, in political democracy and market capitalism, in . . . local communities and in public ritual that enthusiastically celebrates patriotism (p. 20).

Pines casts his net so wide for strategic reasons. He wants to suggest that these myriad traditionalist protests reflect an underlying national mood that can (and will) be successfully translated into a conservative political and, ultimately, cultural majority. Even so, he fails to explicate fully how libertarians can co-exist with the Moral Majority and how neo-conservative *haut* intellectuals mesh with the new right's populist *ressentiment*. Even Pines admits that these strata "live, work and fight their battles independently of each other." Pines' failure to suggest an underlying unity greater than that of a romance with former glories and past sureties leaves one uncertain whether he is describing a contingent political moment or heralding a new cultural age.

How does this traditionalist resurgence affect the Jewish community? Pines is careful to refer to available Jewish examples in his traditionalist cornucopia. He points, as example, to the phenomemon of the *baal-teshuvah* movement, the increased use of Hebrew in the Reform ritual, and the increasing political and often traditionalist militancy of the Orthodox community. Nonetheless,

Pines lacks an intimate knowledge of Judaism and his examples do not adequately capture the vagaries of the contemporary Jewish mood. The paucity of his examples forces one to query their representativeness.

A sociologist of halakhic Judaism cannot but be taken by the commonalities between the cultural values of the "Basics" movement and the abiding concerns of halakhic Jewry towards issues of home and hearth. Reading the political and cultural views of the Moral Majority is not far different from reading an *Agudah* publication. Their positions on abortion, ERA, pornography, government aid to private education and public morality are roughly complementary. Thus, the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations opposed the ERA as an effort "to legislate away the basic sex role differentiation fundamental" to Jewish law. The Lubavitcher Rebbe has urged the introduction of prayer in schools on the grounds that any contribution to a child's spiritual education is to be applauded, differing little from the likes of Sen. Jesse Helms. Tuition tax credit is high on the political demands of both groups. Not surprisingly, the Orthodox Jewish community has been most receptive to traditionalism's call. Indeed, 75% of Boro Park's Orthodox community cast its vote for President Reagan in 1980.

The Orthodox community is a smallish portion of American Jewry, and it would be incorrect to impute developments within Orthodoxy to the Jewish community generally. For many, if not most, American Jews, the habitual liberalism of American Jewish culture still tugs strongly, bottomed as it — is in large part, at least — on the secular and socialist ideology of "the world of our fathers." Nonetheless, while the organized community defense groups still

genuflect to traditional icons, there is substantial evidence to suggest that the community itself has veered to a moderate, if not conservative, course. As a largely urban, increasingly elderly community, American Jews share a growing concern about crime and the failure of our criminal justice system. Mostly middle class (although the pockets of Jewish poverty must never be ignored), the Jewish community has shifted its political focus on taxes and welfare entitlements. On matters of affirmative action and quotas, conservative and Jewish groups see eye to eye.

One must recognize, however, that at least the non-Orthodox community rejects the New Right's focus on "social issues." Empirical surveys suggest that most Jews would oppose restrictions on abortion, homosexuality, or pornography, although they may disapprove of such activity. This penchant for choice can only be explained by the belief that tolerance toward personal life style choices reinforces the Jewish claim for religious tolerance. Nonetheless, both the conservative and Jewish constituencies share an increasing set of common concerns.

The central Jewish concern about the traditionalist movement is its effect on the pluralism and religious tolerance embedded in America's "civil religion," which happily accepts Judaism as a valid religious faith within the ambit of pluralist legitimacy. Thus, within limits, rabbis as well as priests and ministers open Congress, bless sailing regattas, and host ecumenical panels.¹ Unlike Europe, where Ju-

1. Indeed, as Samuel Hill and Dennis Owen perceptively comment, Rev. Bailey Smith's notorious *faux pas* that "God Almighty does not hear the prayer of a Jew" is less disturbing for its theological exclusivity than for the political implications that exclusivity suggests for our civil religion. Smith prefaced his remarks as follows: "It is interesting

daism has been at best tolerated and at worst persecuted, under the American civil religion Judaism is accepted if not celebrated.

While the Jewish community can only find comfort in the religious right's solidarity with Israel,² until their theological fears are assuaged the Jewish community will remain ambiguous about its ultimate relationship with the traditionalist right. Thus, Arthur Hertzberg, former President of the American Jewish Congress, has written, "As a Jew, I am not cheered by the support for Israel expressed by some of the major figures of the New Right." "Some Christian Zionists," Hertzberg continues, "as they wax enthusiastic about the realm of the

at great political rallies how you have a Protestant to pray, a Catholic to pray and then you have a Jew to pray. With all due respect to those dear people my friends, God Almighty does not hear . . ." (S. Hill & D. Owen, *The New Religious Political Right in America* [Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1982], p. 98).

2. The fundamentalist position on Israel has been clearly articulated by Rev. Jerry Falwell who stated, "To stand against Israel is to stand against God. . . . We . . . believe . . . that the Jews have the historical, theological and legal right to the land called Israel" (J. Falwell, ed., *The Fundamentalist Phenomenon* [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1981], p. 215). Falwell, at least, is prepared to support not merely the "heavenly Jerusalem" of Christian theology but its earthly counterpart, the Jewish state.

Jews, also talk about the need, in the short run, to make the existing gentile society totally Christian." As ever, Jewish insecurity is stirred by intimations of moral monopoly.

One must be wary of claims that the Jewish community is *essentially* liberal or conservative. Indeed, the secular implications of evangelical theology may limit the political attraction of the traditionalist movement to American Jews. Some commentators have suggested that "Most of the Jews who voted for Reagan did not vote for him because he was a conservative" but because of his strong position on Israel. While only time will test this assertion, it is clear that one can no longer argue, as did Alexander Pekelis, that "the tradition and fate of [Jews] are undissolubly bound to those of the forces of liberalism."³ The traditionalist response detailed by Pines has struck a chord in American society whose resonance the Jewish community cannot easily ignore.

3. Alexander Pekelis, "Full Equality in a Free Society: A Program for Jewish Action," in M. Konvitz, ed., *Law and Social Action* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1970), p. 242.

MARSHALL J. BREGER is a visiting fellow at The Heritage Foundation, Washington, D.C., and associate professor of Law at SUNY Law School.

A Clear-Eyed View of the Battles

The Arab-Israeli Wars. By CHAIM HERZOG. New York. Random House, 1982. 392 pp. \$20.00.

Reviewed by HOWARD M. SACHAR

CHAIM HERZOG, whose career as lawyer, intelligence officer, diplomat, military historian and, as of recent date, President of the State of Is-

rael, has been extraordinarily wide-ranging, even for an Israeli, has written a lucid and absorbing survey of his nation's ongoing conflict with its Arab neighbors. One of the book's most useful innovations is its willingness to categorize the War of Attrition between 1968 and 1970, and the interminable struggle against Arab guerrillas, as "legitimate" wars within the Middle Eastern context. Accordingly, they

rate separate chapters and are addressed as forthrightly as are the better-known and wider-ranging confrontations of 1948, 1956, 1967, and 1973.

While offering little new material beyond Netanel Lorch's classic *The Edge of the Sword*, the four chapters dealing with the War of Independence provide us with a clearer understanding of the essentially rag-tag campaign that the Israelis were obliged to wage in 1948 (an insight all the more poignant by contrast with Israel's recent cornucopia of mechanized and electronic equipment), and of the precariousness of their circumstances during the months immediately preceding and following British departure. The author does not hesitate to second-guess Israeli strategy during this initial "partisan" era. The priority given to the Negev campaign against Egypt is judged a mistake. In Herzog's view, his nation's limited military reserves more properly might have been committed to the Judean Mountain corridor and, thereby, to the ultimate security of Jerusalem. The decision was Yigael Yadin's and, Herzog argues, it was sold to Ben-Gurion against the prime minister's better judgment, with consequences for the future of Jerusalem that endlessly bedeviled Israel's military and diplomatic position.

The author is equally astringent in evaluating the lessons of the Sinai Campaign and of the Six-Day War. By and large, he appreciates the qualitative superiority of Israel's officers over their Arab counterparts, their willingness to lead by example, their flexibility and resourcefulness during the shifting course of battle. But he does not stint in his account of occasional blunders, among them the ill-advised attack on the Mitla Pass in 1956, and Moshe Dayan's failure in 1967 to rein advancing Israeli units

driving forward to the Suez Canal. Herzog's account of the War of Attrition elaborates somewhat upon introductory material in his earlier volume, *The War of Atonement*, even as his description of the Yom Kippur conflict necessarily is more abbreviated. Yet his salient observations have, by now, gained in sensitivity and perspective. The decision to deep-bomb Egyptian targets in 1970 is rated as profoundly misguided, leading inevitably to the near-catastrophe of Soviet-Israeli air battles along the Suez Canal. "Dado" Elazar, chief of staff during the Yom Kippur War, emerges in this latest book as a commander of exemplary courage and tenacity and, thus, undeserving of the harsh judgment rendered by the Agranat Report of 1974.

It is of interest that the chapter treating the Entebbe raid is far superior to earlier journalistic accounts that appeared in full book form. Spare and understated, Herzog's prose enhances the sense of controlled, taut excitement that infused the rescue effort itself. Moreover, the book's concluding chapter, with its account of the recent invasion of Lebanon, is by no means a hasty appendage. Although sent to press before Israel's occupation of west Beirut, its evaluation of the security considerations that impelled "Operation Peace in the Galilee" is impressively full-bodied and, in view of the author's skepticism about earlier Israeli raids into heavily populated Arab territory, unexpectedly sympathetic. Among the book's most important virtues, finally, is its superb collection of fifty-three maps and diagrams. It is difficult to imagine a military history more effectively illustrated.

The Arab-Israeli Wars has its shortcomings, and they are not trivial. Its vantage point is entirely Israeli. There is little in text or bibliography to suggest extensive famil-

ilarity with the Arab side of the picture. Describing the flight of Palestinian Arabs in 1948, it parrots the — by now — thoroughly discredited line that the Arab governments themselves encouraged this tragic exodus. Herzog knows better. He knows, too, that France played a critical role in Israel's Sinai victory of 1956, that Israeli troops were reprovisioned during their offensive, that Israel's cities were protected from enemy bombers, and that the Egyptian destroyer *Ibrahim al-Awal* was driven off from Haifa — all by the French air force. Not a word appears on this decisive Great Power aid. In June of 1967 the Arab armies were massed to repel, then to counterattack, an anticipated Israeli effort to crack Nasser's blockade of Sharm el-Sheikh; by Herzog's account, the Arab armies were poised to invade Israel. The description of Israel's air assault on the American signals-ship *Liberty* is unworthy of honest historiography. The Israelis (including the author) knew exactly what they were attacking and why they were attacking. In the Yom Kippur War, the driving force behind the conception and execution of the Suez counter-crossing was Arik

Sharon. Herzog, a veteran Laborite, a devoted admirer of Ben-Gurion and critic of Begin (as is this reviewer), has much to say about Sharon's insubordination and lack of personal integrity — assessments possibly fair and accurate — but has no comment whatever to make of Sharon's historic role in outflanking the Egyptian Third Army. Dayan's record in the 1973 war unquestionably was ambivalent; yet it was hardly the collage of indecision and faintheartedness that appears in these pages. Neither, despite Herzog's implication, was Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin an instinctive appeaser during the Entebbe crisis, belatedly chivvied from his equivocation by a stiff-spined Shimon Peres.

The reader is best served by concentrating on Herzog's strategic and tactical descriptions, and ignoring his diplomatic omissions and political innuendoes. In any case, there is feast enough here of straightforward military history to justify purchase of the book, even at twice its price.

HOWARD M. SACHAR is professor of history at The George Washington University, Washington, D.C.

On Observance and Non-Observance

TO THE EDITOR OF JUDAISM:

I read and re-read Dr. Solomon B. Freehof's short essay on "Non-Observance and Jewish Law," in your Winter 1983 issue, and fail to understand both historically and religiously how the author arrives at his conclusions. Why one would conclude that what "people do not observe has an influence on the halakhah," or that one can evaluate "the true state of the observance of the commandments" through a statistical study of which questions are asked, is beyond me. It certainly is an interesting and perhaps original approach to explaining away why Reform Judaism has abandoned the observance of Mitzvot, and has not allowed its masses to be exposed to our primary Halakhic sources so that they would know what and when to ask. I believe that the essay is filled with historical distortions. Certainly, in most, if not all, generations, there were some Jews who did not observe some or all of the Mitzvot. That is why Prophets chastised and religious leaders preached. As a matter of fact, God, who revealed the Law, anticipated this condition when He allowed for us to do *Teshuvah* and repent. Throughout the generations there were those who did not learn, or were not given the opportunity to be Jewishly enlightened. But all civilized nations know that ignorance of the law is not an acceptable excuse. Not asking merely points to a fundamental lack of knowledge or recognition of the need to ask. That often is the fault of the community, schools, teachers and rabbis, who have not stimulated or provoked to ask. I am reminded of the son in the Haggadah "who knows not what to ask," of whom we are instructed "*at p'tah lo*," you motivate him to ask. Has the movement which Dr. Freehof represents fulfilled that role, or has it merely looked for sociological explanations why Jews no longer observe. . .

When one denies the divinity, eternity and sanctity of the Law, any condition and rationalization may be used to explain why people no longer observe. . .

Who and what was asked of the great halakhic authorities has little, if anything, to do with the level of observance. It is well known that certain Rabbis "specialized" in certain areas of Jewish law . . . and, therefore, had questions posed to them from near and far . . . My own grandfather was the acknowledged expert of Rumania in the field of *agunot* and, therefore, one finds tens of responsa in that subject in his *She'lot u'Tshuvot R'BAZ*. The contemporary work of Rabbi Eliezer Waldenberg of Jerusalem is filled with . . . medical-ethical questions, simply because he is an acknowledged "giant" in the field, working closely with the medical staff of Shaare Zedeck Hospital in Jerusalem. Following Freehof's logic, would one conclude that the community of the Bais Halevi was non-observant, because one only finds Talmudic analysis and *Lomdut* in his responsa, rather than practical questions and answers? How far from the truth!

Furthermore, who asks questions of the great responders? Only Jews who are committed and devoted to all of Jewish law. If one were to initiate a study of . . . those Jews who have asked *She'elot* throughout the generations, beginning with the Gaonic period all the way down to our era's responsa of the revered and respected Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, we would find that the common denominator to the majority of these *Shoalim* is an absolute and genuine commitment to the totality of Halakhah, irrelevant to the specific question they sought an answer to. That commitment was, of course, based on the acknowledgment of the Divine origin and eternal validity of the Law.

Charles Liebman . . . wrote that "Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Jews can be ranged along a continuum in so consistent a manner that an observer might be inclined to suggest that the

differences really boil down to the fact that the Orthodox are the more committed to a religious belief and practice, Reform the least committed, and Conservative in the middle. Regardless of how simplistic and even vulgar the statement sounds it is truer than most Jews would like to believe." Many Reform Jewish leaders are concerned nowadays with how to save the remnant of their empty temples. To try to rationalize why there is non-observance among the Reform ranks would only add salt to their painful wound.

A disillusionment, a fear, an inherent sense of doubt has taken hold of a great many thinking and reflecting Jews, particularly of the younger generation. A terrible void has been created which, by default, has been filled by ignorance, assimilation, mixed marriages, fads and cults. Thus, there is no need for Freehof's proposed study. The answers are too painfully and regrettably clear.

Pittsburgh, Pa.

ELIYAHU SAFRAN

RABBI FREEHOF replies:

In . . . (his) letter, Rabbi Safran has fulfilled his duty as an Orthodox rabbi, because there were implications in my article that must be deeply disturbing to a conscientious Orthodox rabbi today. When an Orthodox rabbi is confronted with the tremendous phenomenon of the neglect of Jewish law and custom today, his only explanation can be that either the people are wilful sinners or that they have been misled by Reformers and Conservatives. He cannot possibly accept the fact that the vast neglect of the mitzvos is a natural and a normal phenomenon. But he must not mind being puzzled at it. I remember recently reading in the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* that people have neglected leaving a square unplastered in the house and he, Solomon Ganzfried, adds that he does not know why they have neglected it (#126:1).

The fact is that vast sections of Jewish law fade away. No Reformers or Conservatives or Reconstructionists have *ordered* the people to disobey. The

non-observance is a social fact and we must cope with it.

Rabbi Safran has a somewhat stronger argument as to why certain responsa collections lack answers on certain subjects. He says it is because the particular scholar is a specialist in a certain subject and, therefore, he is asked questions on it. This is, of course, correct, but it is not the whole fact. David Hoffmann, the head of the Hildesheimer school in Berlin was certainly an expert in *Hashen Mishpat* and if he has only a handful of responsa in this field, it is simply because his people did not ask him, since they use the civil courts. So, with regard to the reason for modern Jewish non-observance, I am sure that Rabbi Safran is mistaken, but with regard to the proportionate questions in the responsa books, we both are right.

Pittsburgh, Pa. SOLOMON B. FREEHOF

Religious "Freedom" in Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF JUDAISM:

Two main themes emerge from the symposium on "Reform and Conservative Judaism in Israel" in the Fall 1982 issue of JUDAISM. These themes seem almost paired and come through as a general belittling of the business of "merely" founding and sustaining congregations, together with an asserted readiness to function as formulators and leaders in a movement for spiritual renewal in Israel. The very last paragraph of the last entry says it simply: "There is . . . a spiritual vacuum in Israel which we intend to fill."

Some questions immediately intrude: What are the credentials of either movement to such a self-designated role as spiritual renewers in Israel? Can either movement point to a track record as awakeners of the Jewish *neshamah* of their thousands of congregants? Is not the American environment, both Jewish and non-Jewish, no less a "spiritual vacuum," no less a-moral, no less steeped in crude, naive hedonism, no less dominated by a folksy nihilistic materialism than is the

environment in Israel? As a matter of fact, it may not be too farfetched to suggest that America is the very model that Israeli public life unthinkingly follows as it lapses into its own spiritual vacuum. . .

As one who has been long active in Conservative synagogues I much prefer our religious services to what I found in the Orthodox Israeli houses of worship. I therefore confess to being taken aback by the implied denigration of congregational and synagogal activities that is found, it seems, in all participants in the symposium. I find this gratuitous writing off of these activities puzzling in the extreme, coming as it does from those who, in the final analysis, must point to these very synagogal activities as their most significant contribution to Jewish life in the diaspora. One gets the impression that such activities are seen as lacking a certain quality of religious *macho*, too low key, too beset with daily concerns, and too little graced with "prophet on the soap box" imagery. . .

But it seems to this observer that the simplest way for both movements to make an impact on Israel, to pay their "living-in-Israel" dues, to become accepted as authentic Israeli phenomena, is exactly in the founding and maintaining of synagogues, many synagogues, little synagogues, struggling synagogues, but Israeli synagogues par excellence, that would extend the hand of welcome to all, to the non-*dati* no less than to the *dati*. They would be close to the people and afford to the Israeli a house of religious worship not dominated by a party or by professionals but one where each . . . would be equally welcome to reach out to God. Such synagogues would immediately lay to rest any lingering stain that may attach to Reform and Conservative newcomers as "rich, *galut* Jews."

I suppose the founding of those Kibbuzim by our Reform friends is a substitute of sorts for the founding of synagogues. As an involved Conservative Jew I strongly feel that, for us, the more productive road is in the creation

of houses of worship. This may not yield immediately the kind of public-relations payoff that more visible institutions may yield but, in the long run, this would lead to a true Conservative presence in Israel, with all the spiritual benefits that would thus accrue to those thousand of Israelis who can never see themselves as part of "obscurantist" Orthodoxy but would discover the tolerance and understanding that is part of our Jewish religious heritage.

As for the task of spiritual renewal, both in Israel and the rest of the world, it is too important and too big to be assumed by any one group as its private bailiwick. This task awaits the efforts of all who see themselves created in the image of God. It is a task of a scope and compass to transcend differences in halakhah, differences in ritual observance and differences in political programs. In this battle there is room for all.

Dallas, Tex.

RONALD GRUEN

TO THE EDITOR OF JUDAISM:

At the founding of *Medinat Yisrael*, Rav Yehudah Leib Maimon (Fishman), first Minister of Religions in Israel (1948), convinced David Ben Gurion that the Jeffersonian principle of "separation of Church and State" cannot apply to a Jewish State, a *Judenstadt*. Just as Jews cannot be divorced from Judaism, so their state cannot be divested from *shabbat*, *haggim*, *kashrut*, and *mishpat ivri b'in-ya-nay mishpahah*. In those years there were hunger strikes in I.D.F.-*Tzahal* by soldiers — *dati-yim* — to obtain basic religious rights. In one instance, they struck for the right of *Hassidim* to retain their *peyot*, while serving in the army. These incidents truly disturbed Ben Gurion.

Ben Gurion wanted one national army, not a religious-half army, and an irreligious-half army. . . . Following this line of logic, Rav Maimon convinced "the old man," to have one *kosher* army, not separate *treifa* and *kosher* divisions. Following this same logic, all couples should be married by one rabbinat that accepts the *Even Haezer* in

Hilkhot Nesuin and *Hilkhot Gittin*. Otherwise the nation would have divided families.

The Mishnah in *Yevamot* (13a and b) is germane to this discussion:

"Though these (Beth Shammai) forbade what to others (Beth Hillel) was permitted, and these (Beth Hillel) regarded as ineligible what the others (Beth Shammai) regarded as eligible, Beth Shammai nevertheless did not refrain from marrying women from (the families) of Beth Hillel. Nor did Beth Hillel (refrain from marrying) from (the families) of Beth Shammai . . ."

From the Mishnah we can see how sectarianism was rife in that seminal period. There were a variety of groups within the Pharisees . . . and sects beyond the Pharisees. There were those on the periphery of the Jewish people who believed that the *mashiah* had come, but they ate *kosher*, kept the *brit milah* and *shabbat*. What held all those sects together despite their halakhik differences? It was simply their deep family feeling that they could marry each other, drink wine together, (without the *h'shosh* of *neseekh*), and eat together, knowing that all agreed upon the basic laws of *kashrut*.

What was true for the fermenting sectarianism in the days of the Mishnah is also more true today. "Separation of church and state" and "religious pluralism" are totally irrelevant to the problem of sectarianism in Israel today. What is essential is to have our young

people marrying each other, and *mehutanim* drinking wine, and eating together. This is fundamental.

We are dealing with a family problem, with the halakhic problem of *yuh'sin* which is unique to Judaism and the Jewish people. Our concern is with the preservation of the Jewish family and the unity of the whole people.

The Conservatives have the freedom to build 60 congregations; the Reform have the freedom to build their own congregations. Conservative Jews or Reform Jews may continue to pray in their way; they may conduct decorous services with mixed pews, with or without instrumental music on *shabbat*. They may conduct social-actions programs, visit prisons, conduct anti-poverty programs, help unwed mothers, support *Shalom Akhshav*.

They may found *Lehrhaus* study groups in the big cities as Franz Rosenzweig and Martin Buber did in Berlin. They may have more serious study groups like those led by Nechama Lebovitz and her brother Yeshayahu Lebovitz. They may even shake up the sedentary intellectual establishment. Who knows, maybe a man of great piety, learning and charisma, like R. Abraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook may arise from right-wing Conservatism.

But I beg my fellow Jews: let us not divide the Jewish family and let us not divide our people. Let us keep *ahdut yisrael*.

Wilmington, Del. LEONARD B. GEWIRTZ

Chicago

Contemporary Judaism

THE PEOPLE OF THE BOOK

Drama, Fellowship, and Religion

Samuel C. Heilman

Judaism has long derived its identity from its sacred books. The book or scroll—rather than the image or idol—is emblematic of Jewish faith and tradition. Heilman presents a study of a group of Orthodox Jews engaged in the time-honored practice of *lernen*, the repeated review and ritualized study of the sacred texts. These are, he argues, the genuine “People of the Book,” preserving one of the central activities of traditional Jewish life.

Cloth \$22.50 310 pages Illus.

RETURN TO JUDAISM

Religious Renewal in Jerusalem

Janet Aviad

This is a study of an unusual type of religious awakening, for the converts are secular Jews who have adopted Orthodox Judaism. They are the *baalei teshuvah*—“those who repent and return”—and their movement is both a dramatic expression of Jewish religious resistance to secularization and a paradigmatic example of contemporary religious revival movements in general. Drawing on data accumulated during two years of fieldwork in Jerusalem, Aviad analyzes this movement fully and considers its broader historical and sociological significance.

Cloth \$20.00 208 pages

JEWISH IDENTITIES IN FRANCE

An Analysis of Contemporary French Jewry

Dominique Schnapper

Translated by Arthur Goldhammer

Foreword by Edward Shils

Despite both a long history of persecution and the assimilating forces of modernity, the French Jews persist. They persist, however, in different ways and to different degrees in relation to their Jewish traditions. Basing her analysis on a series of probing interviews with a wide range of French Jews in four communities, Schnapper reveals the variety of ways these groups identify with and maintain their Jewish heritage while adapting their cultural traditions to the requirements of life in a predominantly Christian industrial society.

Cloth \$25.00 224 pages

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

5801 South Ellis Avenue Chicago, IL 60637

BOOKS RECEIVED

From November 1982 through April 1983

Listing of a book does not preclude its being reviewed in a subsequent issue of JUDAISM.

American Jewry

Angel, Marc D. *La America, the Sephardic Experience in the United States*.

Philadelphia, Pa.: Jewish Publication Society, 1982. 220 pp., \$15.95.

Cohen, Sarah Blacker, ed. *From Hester Street to Hollywood, The Jewish-American Stage and Screen*. Indiana University Press, 1983. 278 pp. \$22.50.

Halpern, Ben. *The American Jew, A Zionist Analysis*. New York: Schocken Books, 1983. 192 pp. \$6.95 (paper).

Halpern, Moyshe-Leyb. *In New York*. Philadelphia, Pa.: Jewish Publication Society, \$9.95 (paper).

Editors of American Bibliographical Center. *The Jewish Experience in America: A Historical Bibliography*. Santa Barbara, Cal. 190 pp., \$23.50.

Bible

Goldman, Alex J. *The Eternal Books Retold*. New York: Pilgrim Press, 1982. 349 pp. (paper).

Jacobson, Howard. *The Exagogue of Ezekiel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983. 252 pp., \$44.50.

Kolitz, Zvi, *The Teacher: An Existential Approach to the Bible*. New York: Crossroad, 1982. 218 pp., \$12.95.

Plaut, Gunther, ed. *The Torah*. New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations. 1983.

Biography

Jordan, Ruth. *Daughter of the Waves, Memories of Growing Up in Pre-War Palestine*. New York: Taplinger Publishing Co., 1983. 213 pp. \$12.95.

Kaminskaya, Dina. *Final Judgment, My Life as a Soviet Defense Attorney*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983. 364 pp., \$18.95.

Contemporary Judaism

Cardozo, Arlene Rossen. *Jewish Family Celebration*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982. 268 pp., \$17.50.

Gittelsohn, Roland B. *The Extra Dimension: A Jewish View of Marriage*. New York: Union of America Hebrew Congregations, 1983. 270 pp. (paper).

Greenstein, Howard. *Judaism — An Eternal Covenant*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983. 176 pp., \$9.95 (paper).

Schachter (Shalomi) Z. and Donald Gropman. *Guide for the New Jewish Spirit. The First Step*. Integral Yoga Institute (paper).

Kahane, Rabbi Meir. *Listen World, Listen Jew*. Brooklyn, N.Y., Jerusalem: Institute of the Jewish Idea, 1980. (paper).

Segal, Abraham. *One People, A Study in Comparative Judaism*. New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1982. 160 pp. (paper).

Festschrift

Maier, Joseph B. and Waxman, Chaim I. eds. *Ethnicity, Identity, and History Essays in Memory of Werner Cahnman*. Rutgers University, N.J.: Transactions Books, 1983. 350 pp. \$35.95.

Fiction

Appelfield, Aharon. *The Age of Wonders*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983. 207 pp., \$3.95 (paper).

Denker, Henry. *The Healers*. New York: William Morrow & Co., 1983. 451 pp., \$14.95.

Krich, A.M. *Sweethearts*. New York: Crown, 288 pp. \$14.95.

Petuchowski, Jakob J. *Our Masters Taught. Rabbinic Stories and Sayings*. New York: Crossroads Publishing Co., 1983. 115 pp., \$10.95.

Potok, Chaim. *The Book of Lights*, New York: Fawcett Press, 1982. 389 pp., \$3.95 (paper).

Schwartz, Howard. *Elijah's Violin and Other Jewish Fairy Tales*. New York: Harper & Row, 1983. 272 pp. \$19.95 (paper).

Zweig, Stefan. *Beware of Pity*. New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1983. 384 pp., \$14.95.

Hasidism and Mysticism

Jacobs, Louis. *On Ecstasy, A Tract by Dobh Baer of Lubavitch*. Chappaqua, N.Y.: Rossel Books, 1983 (paper).

Kushner, Lawrence. *Honey From the Rock: Ten Gates of Jewish Mysticism*. San Francisco: Harper & Row. 149 pp., \$7.95 (paper).

Rotenberg, Mordechai. *Dialogue With Deviance. The Hasidic Ethic and the Theory of Social Contradiction*. Philadelphia: Ishi Publications, 1983. 214 pp., \$25.

Holocaust

Bierman, John. *Righteous Gentile*. New York: Bantam Books, 1983. 224 pp., \$3.50 (paper).

Charny, Israel W. *Genocide, The Human Cancer*. New York: Hearst Books, 1983. 430 pp., \$10.45 (paper).

Demetz, Hana. *The House on Prague Street*. New York: Bantam Windstone Books. 165 pp., \$3.50 (paper).

Dewar, Diana. *The Saint of Auschwitz, The Story of Maximilian Kolbe*. New York: Harper & Row, 1983. 146 pp., \$5.95 (paper).

Dorian, Emil. *The Quality of Witness*. Translated by Mara Soceanu Vamos. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1983. 350 pp., \$19.95.

- Eisenberg, Azriel, *Witness to the Holocaust*. New York: Pilgrim Press, N.Y. 1983. 649 pp., (paper).
- Gross, Leonard. *The Last Jews in Berlin*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1982. 349 pp., \$15.50.
- Handler, Andrew, ed. and translator. *The Holocaust. An Anthology of Jewish Response In Hungary*. University: University of Alabama Press, 1982. \$15.75.
- Lester, Elenore. *Wallenberg: The Man in the Iron Web*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1982. 183 pp., \$12.95.
- Oberski, Jona. *Childhood*, translated by Ralph Manheim. New York: Doubleday & Co., 1983. 119 pp., \$11.95.
- Porter, Jack Nusan. *Confronting History and Holocaust. Collected Essays 1972-1982*. Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1983. 147 pp., \$9.75.

Israel

- Aviad, Janet. *Return to Judaism. Religious Renewal in Israel*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983. 194 pp., \$20.
- Eban, Abba, introduction. *The Beirut Massacre*. Karz-Cohl Publishing Inc. 1983. 144 pp., \$14.95.
- Elazar, Daniel J. *Governing Peoples and Territories*. Philadelphia: Ishi Publications, 1982. 350 pp., \$25.
- Krausz, Ernest, ed. *The Sociology of the Kibbutz*. New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1983 (paper).
- Levine, Hoag. *Arab Reach, The Secret War Against Israel*. New York: Doubleday Co., 1983. 324 pp., \$17.95.
- Lilker, Shalom. *Kibbutz Judaism, A New Tradition in the Making*. New Jersey: Cornwall Books, 1983. 264 pp., \$14.95.
- Mendes-Flohr, Paul R. ed. *A Land of Two Peoples. Martin Buber on Jews and Arabs*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1983. 319 pp., \$29.95.

Jewish-Christian Relations

- Neusner, Jacob. ed. *Take Judaism for Example*. Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1983. 244 pp.
- Parkes, James. *End of an Exile, Israel, the Jews and the Gentile World*. Mass.: Micah Publishers, 1982. 271 pp. \$8 (paper).
- Rappaport, Solomon. *Jew and Gentile, A Philo-Semitic Aspect*. New York: Philosophical Library, 1980. 258 pp., \$17.50.
- Thompson, Norma H. and Bruce K. Cole, eds. *The Future of Jewish-Christian Relations*. Schenectady, N.Y.: Character Research Press, 1982. 280 pp. (paper).
- Zweigenhaft, Richard L and William G. Domhoff. *Jews in the Protestant Establishment*. New York: Praeger, 1982. 133 pp.

Jewish History

- Harkabi, Yehoshafat. *The Bar Kokhba Syndrome, Risk and Realism in International Politics*. Chappaqua, N.Y.: Rossel Books, 1983. 206 pp., \$15.95.
- Heilman, Samuel C. *The People of the Book, Drama, Fellowship and Religion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983. 335 pp.
- Yerushalmi, Yosef Hayim. *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*. Seattle, Wash.: University of Washington Press, 1982. 144 pp.

Law and Social Justice

- Berkovits, Eliezer. *Not in Heaven: The Nature and Function of Halakha*. New York: KTAV, 1983. 131 pp., \$12.50.
- Epsztein, Leon. *La Justice Sociale Dans La Proche-Orient Ancien et le Peuple de la Bible*. Paris: Edition du Cerf, 1983. 274 pp. (paper).
- Kirschenbaum, Aaron, ed. *Dine Israel*. Tel Aviv: U. of Tel Aviv, 1978-1980 (Hebrew).
- Link-Salinger (Hyman) Ruth. *Jewish Law in our Time*. New York: Bloch Publishing, 1983. 183 pp., \$12.95 (paper).

Medieval Studies

- Friedman, Jerome. *The Most Ancient Testimony. 16th Century Christian Hebraica in the Age of Renaissance Nostalgia*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1983. 278 pp.
- Little, Lester K. *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1983. 267 pp., \$8.95 (paper).
- Maccoby, Hyam. *Judaism on Trial — Jewish-Christian Disputations in the Middle Ages*. New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1982. 245 pp., \$25.
- Messer, Leon Judah, tr. by Isaac Rabinowitz. *The Book of the Honeycomb's Flow*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1983. 603 pp., \$55.

Philosophy

- Hellman, John. *Simone Weil. An Introduction to Her Thought*. Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1982. 111 pp., \$11.
- Weiss, Paul. *Privacy*. Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983. 330 pp. \$30.

Prayer and Theology

- Belfer, Dr. Ella, ed. *Jewish Spritual Leadership*. Kotlar Institute for Judaism and Contemporary Thought, 1983. \$13 (paper) (Hebrew).
- Forms of Prayer for Jewish Worship*. Reform Synagogues of Great Britain, 1977.
- Maccoby, Hyam. *The Sacred Executioner. Human Sacrifice and the Legacy of Guilt*. Great Britain: Thames and Judson, 1982. 208 pp., \$19.95.
- Menashe, Abraham, *The Face of Prayer*. New York: Knopf (paper).
- Meyer, Samuel. *The Deacon and the Jewess, Adventures in Heresy*. New York: Philosophical Library, 1982. 186 pp., \$10.

- Nickelsburg, George W.E. and Michael E. Stone. *Faith and Piety in Early Judaism*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983. 272 pp., \$19.95.
- Stokes, Kenneth, ed. *Faith Development in the Adult Life Cycle*. New York: William Sadler, 1982. 320 pp., \$9.95 (paper).

Women

- Bitton-Jackson, Livia. *The Jewish Woman in Christian Literature: Madonna or Courtesan?* New York: Seabury Press, 1982. 138 pp., \$7.95 (paper).
- Brotten, Bernadette J. *Women Leaders in the Ancient Synagogue*. Chico, Cal.: Scholars Press. \$20 (paper).
- Heschel, Susannah, ed. *On Being A Jewish Feminist*. New York: Schocken Books, 1983. 333 pp. (paper).

Yiddish

- Geipel, John. *Mame Loshin, The Making of Yiddish*. Great Britain: Journeyman Press, 1983. 113 pp. \$9 (paper).
- Goldberg, Judith N. *Laughter Through Tears, the Yiddish Cinema*. New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1983. 171 pp., \$22.50.

JUDAISM

\$3.50

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SUMMER 1983